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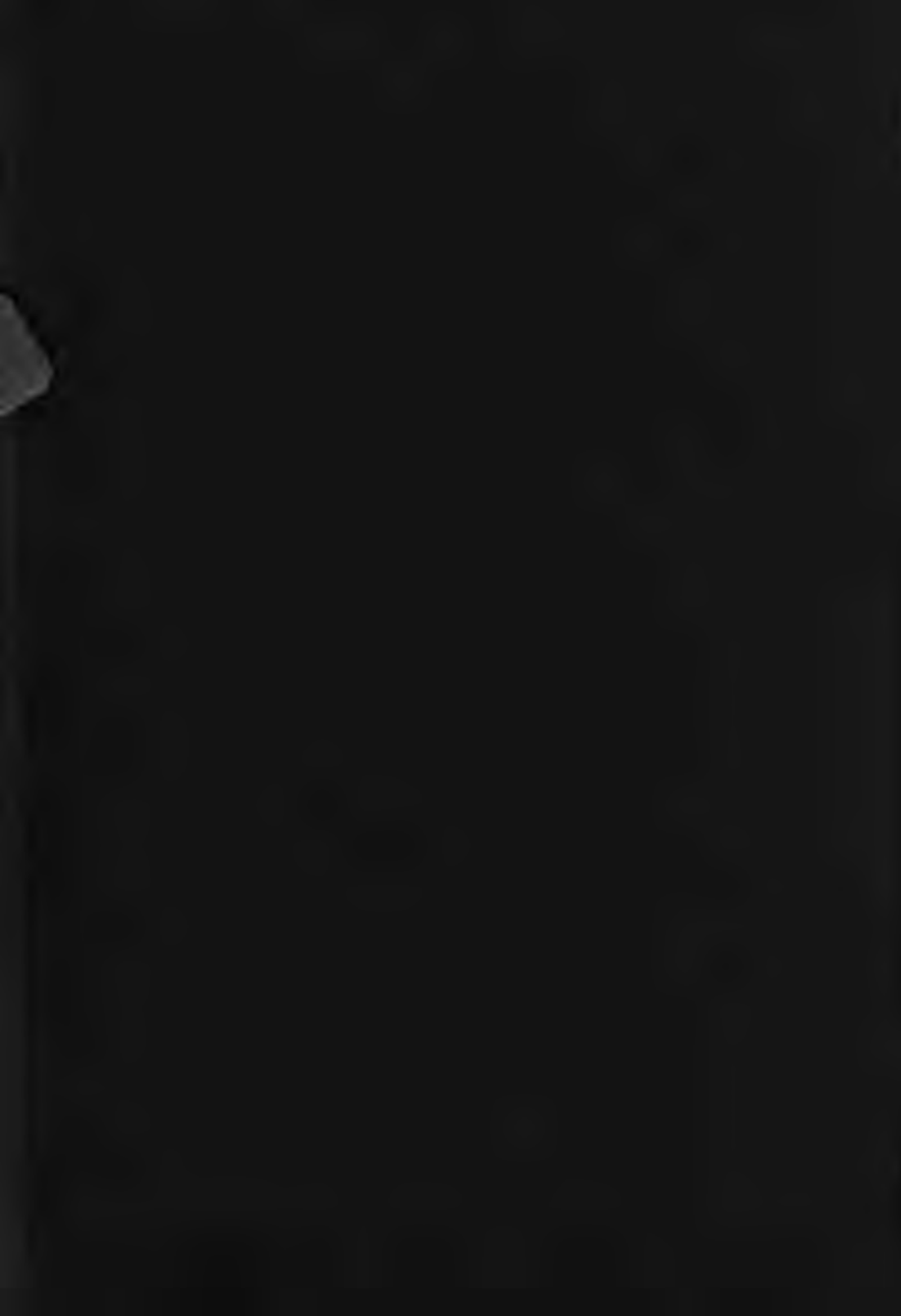
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NOTES ABOUT

GOUROCK

BY REV. DAVID MACRAE.

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TO THE PEOPLE OF GOUROCK,
AMONGST WHOM I SPENT MANY HAPPY DAYS,
This Little Volume
OF HISTORICAL NOTES AND LOCAL INFORMATION,
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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*** These Notes are published for the purpose (1) of preserving some items of information about Gourock which might otherwise be lost; (2) of gathering together a good deal more that has hitherto lain scattered about, some of it in places not easy of access; (3) of providing for others such a book as I should have been glad to be able to lay my own hands upon when I went to Gourock, and wanted to know what there was of interest about the place; and (4) of clearing the way to some extent for any one who may hereafter undertake to prepare a better and more complete history.*

DAVID MACRAE.



NOTES ABOUT GOUROCK,

Chiefly Historical.*

I. THE KEMPOCH STANE.

One of the most noteworthy objects in Gourock, though one of the least noticeable, is the "Kempoch Stane." You reach it by a narrow pathway which passes back between the houses nearly opposite the Star Hotel, and runs up the side of the little steep,

* Gourock can be reached from Glasgow in an hour and a half. From Greenock it can be reached by car in half an hour, and by steamer in fifteen minutes. The village lies along the shore of the firth, right and left from Kempoch Point, opposite the mouth of Loch Long, where the firth broadens out into its full beauty and magnificence. A hill called Barrhill, precipitous on the western flank, and descending and narrowing to a point at Kempoch, cuts Gourock into two villages—Gourock proper and Ashton, the east and west ends of the place—each with its own bay. Gourock proper looks mainly up the Clyde, towards Roseneath and Helensburgh. Ashton, round the point, looks across the firth westward to Strone, Holy Loch, and Dunoon. The village is in Renfrewshire, and votes for the county member. Its resident population is about three thousand. Gourock is said to derive its name from two Celtic words signifying "circular bay,"—as Greenock derives its name from *Grian-aig*, or "sunny bay." Those who have been taught to believe that in Greenock it always rains except when it snows, may accept the origin of its name without admitting its accuracy; but Gourock has its circular bay, whether the name points to it or not.

bringing you to a small green angle of ground between the high dead wall of Gourrock Castle and the edge of the cliff.*

On this grassy patch you behold, standing erect, a remarkable-looking block of grey mica schist, that might (had Gourrock been near Sodom) have passed for the bituminous remains of Lot's wife. It stands about six feet high, with a diameter of two, and has a faint resemblance to a mantled figure, with a shrouded head. This is the famous "lang stane" of Gourrock, more familiarly spoken of as "Granny Kempoch,"—little known and less respected in these days, but far otherwise in days gone by.

It is supposed that the Kempoch Stane marks the site in Druid times of an altar to Baal; and that it was wont to gleam, more than two thousand years ago, in the light of the Baal-fire, with the blood of human sacrifices flowing round its base.

However that may be, the Kempoch Stane was for many centuries an object of superstitious awe and reverence. The very ballast for ships from Gourrock Bay was judged sacred in old times from its connection

* The Castle occupies a commanding position on the front of the plateau overlooking Kempoch Point. It stands close to the Free Church, and, along with it, forms one of the most prominent objects in the view of Gourrock as seen from the firth. The Castle is quite modern, and has no connection with the old Castle of Gourrock, by-and-by to be spoken of. It was built about forty years ago by a Captain Dalzell. It was subsequently occupied by Mr Zoller, the Belgian Consul in Glasgow, in whose day the Belgian flag waved over the mimic battlements. It is at present occupied by Miss Longlands. I understand the titles of the Castle feu require that the plot of ground on which the Kempoch stone stands is not to be built upon, and the proprietor below is required by his title to keep the path to the historic stone open.

with the "Kempoch Stane." Marriages in the district were not regarded as lucky unless the wedded pair passed round the "lang stane," and obtained in this way Granny Kempoch's blessing.

It was chiefly in connection with the winds and the sea that the Kempoch Stane was regarded with superstitious dread. Standing forth on the top of the rock, when there were no trees or houses or Castle walls to intercept the view, Granny Kempoch must have been a marked object to ships sailing up or passing down the Firth; and would look like some one placed there to rule the winds and the waves, and watch the ships as they came and went.

At one time, according to tradition, a monk made money by giving his blessing to sea-going ships, on this spot. Another tradition tells of a withered hag, reputed to be a witch, who for years dwelt beside the mystic stone, dispensing favourable winds to seafaring men, who secured her favour by suitable gifts before sailing from Gourock Bay. But long before, and long after, the witch's day, the sailors and fishermen were wont to take a basketful of sand from the shore and walk seven times round Granny Kempoch, chanting a weird song, to insure for themselves a safe and prosperous voyage.

II. THE TRIAL OF MARY LAMONT FOR WITCHCRAFT.

One of the witch trials of the seventeenth century was connected with the "Kempoch Stane." It presents a strange picture of the superstitions which used to prevail in Scotland ; and as its details are not easily accessible to the public, it may be well to present them here. The mania of which it was one of the latest manifestations had raged over Europe for centuries, and was one of the most deplorable superstitions by which Christendom was ever afflicted and disgraced. Some historians have reckoned that eight or nine millions of persons were put to death for practising the black art, before the mania run its course. As witches were supposed to have sold themselves to the devil, and as the devil was regarded as the Church's great enemy, the clergy took a most active part in the work of discovering witches, putting them to trial, and securing their execution. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed Act after Act levelled against the poor wretches who were supposed to have sold themselves to the devil, and to be in the habit of riding through the air on broomsticks upon the devil's work. If cattle died, if any one suffered unexpected loss, or became subject to any peculiar ailment, it was attributed to witchcraft. The unhappy persons who might be suspected and accused of practising the black art, and who denied, were, in many cases, put to the torture to

induce them to confess. Many, in order to escape the torture, were ready to confess anything and everything that might be charged against them, and on the ground of such confessions they were afterwards put to death.

In the year 1662 the Privy Council granted a commission to several gentlemen for the trial of some women in Gourrock and Greenock who were reputed to be witches. These women had been led (under what influence from within or pressure from without is not known) to declare that they had entered into compact with the devil. One of them was Mary Lamont, a girl still in her teens.

Law, in his "Memorials of the memorable things that fell out within this Island of Britain from 1638 to 1684,"* records Mary Lamont's confession. He says:—"The following extraordinary document printed from the M.S. obligingly communicated to me by Michael Stewart Nicolson, Esq., is well worthy of preservation:—

"(1) She [Mary Lamont] came and offered herself willingly to the trial, saying that God moved her heart to confess, because she had lived long in the devil's service.

(2) She confessed most ingenuously that five years since, Catherine Scot, in Mudiestean, within the parish of Innerkip, learned her to take kyes' milk, bidding her go out in misty mornings, and take with her a harrie tedder, and draw it over the mouth of a mug, saying, 'In God's name, God send us milk, God send it, and meikle of it.' By this means she and the said Katherin got much of their neighbours' milk, and made butter and cheise thereof.†

* Edited by Chas. Kirkpatrick Sharpe, and printed at Edinburgh for Thomas Constable, 1818. Page 70, *et seq.*

† For more particulars concerning this Charm, see *Kirk's Secret Commonwealth*, page 5.

(3) She confessed that two years and a-half since the devil came to the said Katherin Scot's house, in the midst of the night, where were present with them, Margaret M'Kenzie of Greenock, Janet Scot of Gourrock, herself, and several others. The devil was in the likeness of a muckle black man, and sung to them, and they danced : he gave them wine to drink, and wheat bread to eat ; and they were all very merrie. She confesses, at that meeting, the said Kettie Scot made her first acquaintance with the devil, who caused her to drink to him, and shake hands with him.

(4) She confesses that at that time the devil bade her betake herself to his service, and it should be well with her, and bade her forsake her baptism, which she did, delivering herself wholly to him, by putting her one hand on the crown of her head, and the other hand to the sole of her foot, and giving all betwixt these two to him.

(5) She confessed that at that time he gave her a new name, and called her Clowts, and bad her call him Serpent, when she desired to speak with him.

(6) She confessed that at that same time the devil nipped her on the right side, which was very painful for a time, but thereafter he stroked it with his hand, and healed it ; this she confesses to be his mark.

The Seventh Article regards her criminal intercourse with Satan, which she first confessed and then denied.

(8) She confesses that she was at a meeting in the Bridylinne, with Jean King, Kettie Scot, Margaret M'Kenzie, and several others, where the devil was with them in the likeness of a brown dog. The end of their meeting was to raise stormy weather to hinder boats from the fishing ; and she confessed that she, Kettie Scot, and Margaret Holm, came to Allan Orr's house in the likeness of cats, and followed his wife into the chamber, where they took a herring out of a barrel, and having taken a bite, they left it behind them ; which herring the said Allan's wife did eat, and thereafter, taking heavy disease, died. The quarrel was, because the said Allan had put Margaret Holm out of the house where she was dwelling, whereupon she threatened in wrath that he and his wife should not be long together.

(10) She confessed that she, Kettie Scot, Margaret M'Kenzie, and several others, went out to sea betwixt and the land of

Arran, to doe skaith to boats and ships that should come along. They caused the storm to increase greatly, and meeting with Colin Campbell's ship, did rive the sails from her. She confesses that in that voyage she was so overset with ill weather that she took the fever soon after, and did bleed much.

(11) She confessed that when she had been at a meeting sine Yule last, with other witches, in the night, the devil convoyed her home in the dawning; and when she was come near the house wherein she was a servant, her master saw a waff of him as he went away from her.

(12) She confessed that she knew some witches bore much ill will at Blackhall, the younger, and Mr John Hamilton, and would fain give them an ill cast if they could; therefore, about five weeks since, Jean King, Kettie Scot, Janet Holm, herself, and several others, met together in the night, at the back gate of Ardgowan, where the devil was with them in the likeness of a black man, with cloven feet, and directed some of them to fetch white sand from the shore, and cast it about the gates of Ardgowan, and about the minister's house; but she says, when they were about that business, the devil turned them in likeness of cats, by shaking his hands above their heads. She confesses, also, that in that business some were chiefs and ringleaders, others were but followers. This agrees with the 11th article of Kettie Scot's confession.

(13) She confessed, also, that she was with Kettie Scott, Margaret M'Kenzie, and others, at a meeting at Kempoch, where they intended to cast the long-stone into the sea, thereby to destroy boats and ships; where also they danced, and the devil kissed them when they went away.

These Articles were confessed by the said Marie Lamont, at Innerkip, before us, under-subscribers:—Archibald Stewart, of Blackhall; J. Hamilton, minister at Innerkip, &c.”

Law, in his Memorials, makes the following comment upon the Third Article:—

“One of the most remarkable circumstances in this curious confession is that of the *devil's singing*, his voice being represented by witches as hollow and *goustie*, and the music with which he regaled them generally instrumental. In *Satan's Invisible World*, however, there is a story (attested by a reverend minister) of a

piper to whom the devil, 'at a ball of dancing,' taught an obscene song, 'to sing and play as it were this night, and ere two days passed all the lads and lasses of the town were lilting it through the streets. It were an abomination,' adds Sinclair, 'to rehearse it.' In truth, the Scottish minstrels of every description were vulgarly supposed, during the prevalence of the Covenant, to be under the peculiar care and protection of the devil."

Mary Lamont's trial took place on the 4th of March 1662, when the poor girl was found guilty and condemned; and thereafter burned to death.

The witch-mania in Scotland—the victims of which have been reckoned at nearly five thousand persons—was by this time dying down. The people who thought that the putting of witches to death was demanded by the Bible, and was a part of Christian duty, began to find out that in regard to this, as in regard to many other matters, the Bible had been misinterpreted and misunderstood. As late, however, as 1722, the Sheriff of Caithness condemned an old woman to death as a witch; and she accordingly suffered at Dornoch the same fate as poor Mary Lamont.

III. A SCENE 400 YEARS AGO.

In the year 1494 Gourock boasted as distinguished a visitor, and beheld as stirring a sight, as it has ever seen since.

James the IV. of Scotland, the handsome and chivalrous king, who afterwards fell at Flodden, sailed in that year for the Western Isles, from Gourock Bay.

The Clans at that time were in a lawless and disaffected state; and matters had been made worse by the policy of fomenting feuds between the Highland Chiefs—a policy which, it was hoped, would leave them less likely and less able to menace the monarchy or harass their southern neighbours.

James IV. adopted a method nobler and more magnanimous. He put himself in friendly communication with the Chiefs, and endeavoured through them to introduce something like order, and secure, throughout their dominions, the administration of justice. Those who proved incorrigible were punished. But to those Chiefs who lent him their aid, James was generous to a degree both in his acknowledgments and rewards.

More than this, he visited the Highlands in person, attended by an imposing retinue; not only impressing the Clans with a sense of his power, but wherever he went winning the hearts both of Chiefs and vassals by his noble appearance and his cordial and captivating manners.

It was on a kindred mission that in 1494 he arranged for an expedition to the Western Isles. He went to encourage and reward the Chiefs who were loyal, and teach a lesson to the intractable. The point fixed for embarkation was Gourock Bay. One of the bonds chartering vessels for the expedition was made with one "Nicholas of Bour, maister under God of the schip Verdour." It stipulates that "Nicholas shall, God willing, bring the said schipe Verdour, with stuff for them as officers, to the Gouraik, on the west border and sea, aucht miles fra Dumberton or thereby, by the first day of the month of May nixt to cum; and there the said Nicholas shall, with grace of God, receive within the said schip three hundred men accoutred for war, furnished with their vitales, harnes, and artilzery, to pass with the King's highness at his pleasure, and his lieutenants and deputis, for the space of twa months next, and immediat following the said first of May, and put them on land and receive them again."

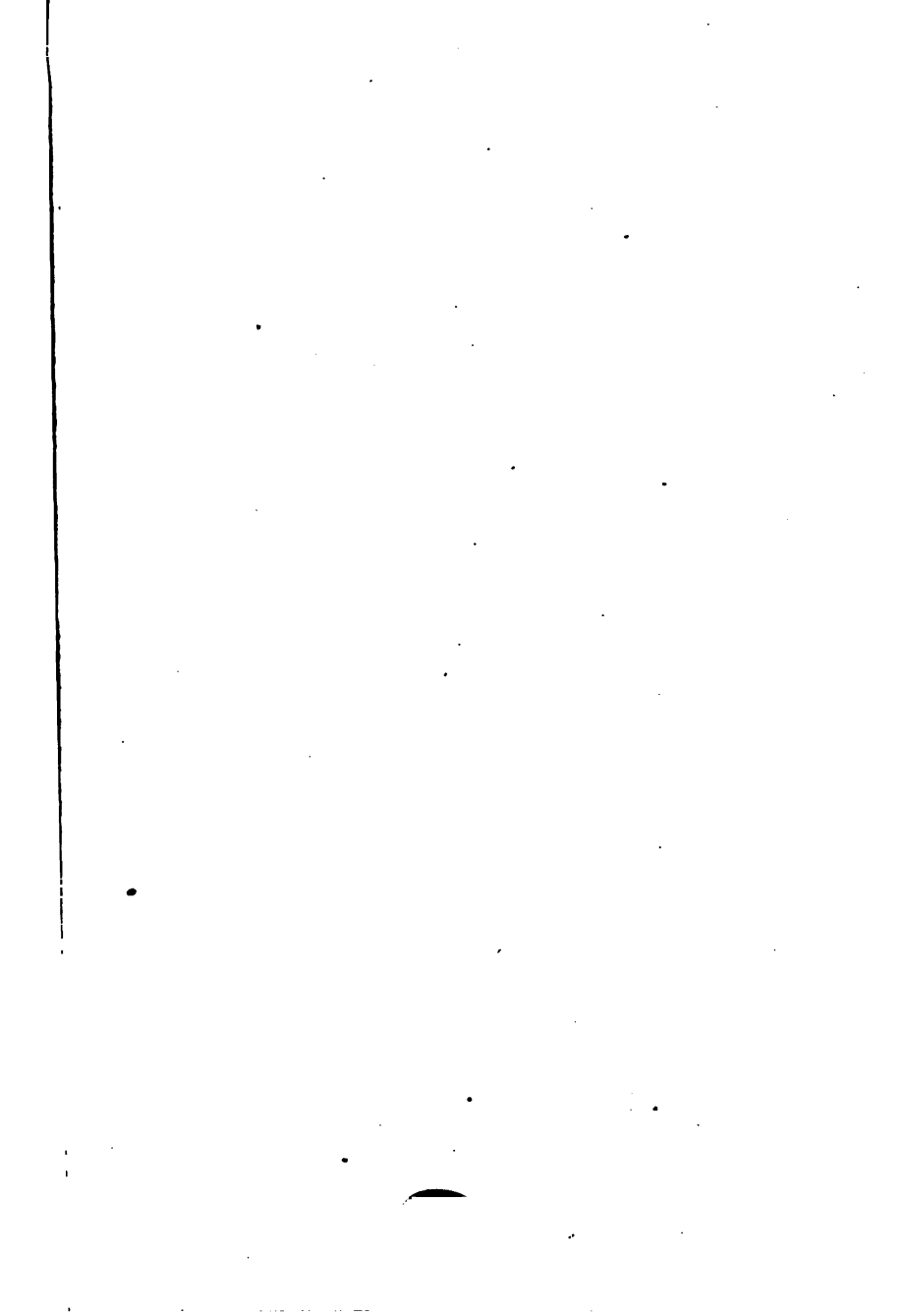
We can imagine the unwonted scene of animation that Gourock on that day of embarkation would present. There were, of course, no streets to be thronged, no shops, no churches, no villas. Nothing but bare hills, the mystic Kempoch Stane perched on the edge of the precipice; a bridle path along the coast; a bleak and bouldery shore; Kempoch Point, rugged and untenanted (save by the wild sea-fowl), striding out into the Firth, and guarding the lonely little anchorage that lay within. But on that day, what a stir! Galleys, with streaming pennons, moored in the bay; armed

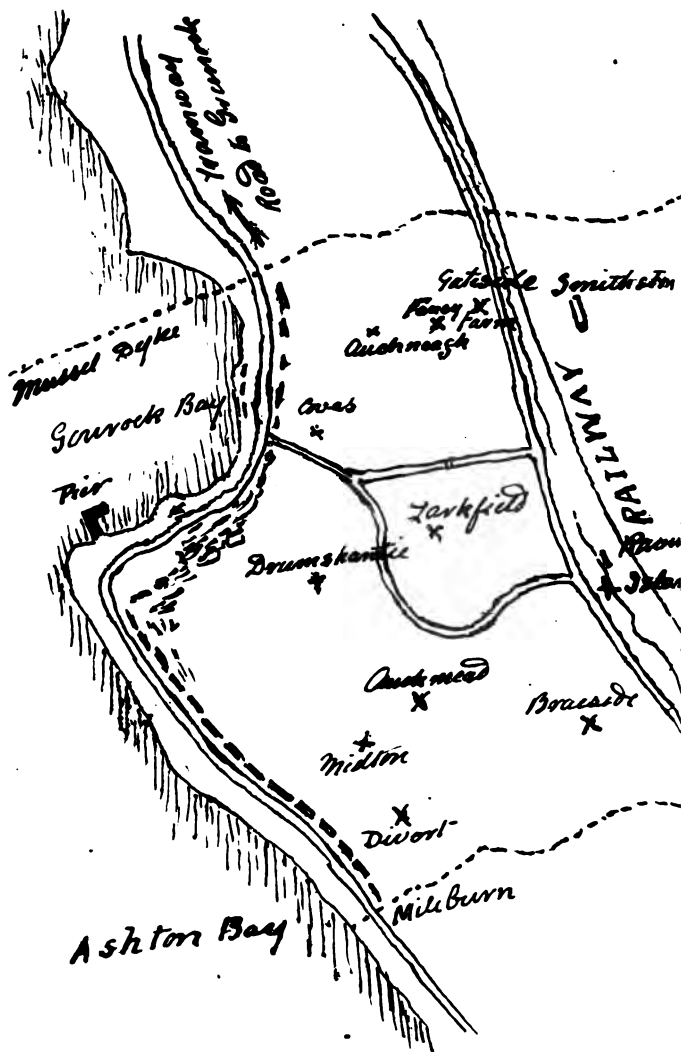
men and sailors swarming on the shore ; Sir Andrew Wood, of Largo, standing on the beach with his officers—that famous Scottish Admiral who had twice vanquished the English fleet with an inferior force, on one occasion capturing five of their ships of war ; King James and his nobles coming down to embark from the castle that frowned from amongst its trees, not far from where Gourrock House stands now. The embarkation was soon over ; the ships, amidst the wild chants of the seamen, spread their canvas and sailed down the Firth for the Mull of Kintyre and the far off Hebrides ; the Governor of Gourrock Castle was back into his little stronghold ; and the bay and the bleak untenanted shores were left to their native loneliness.

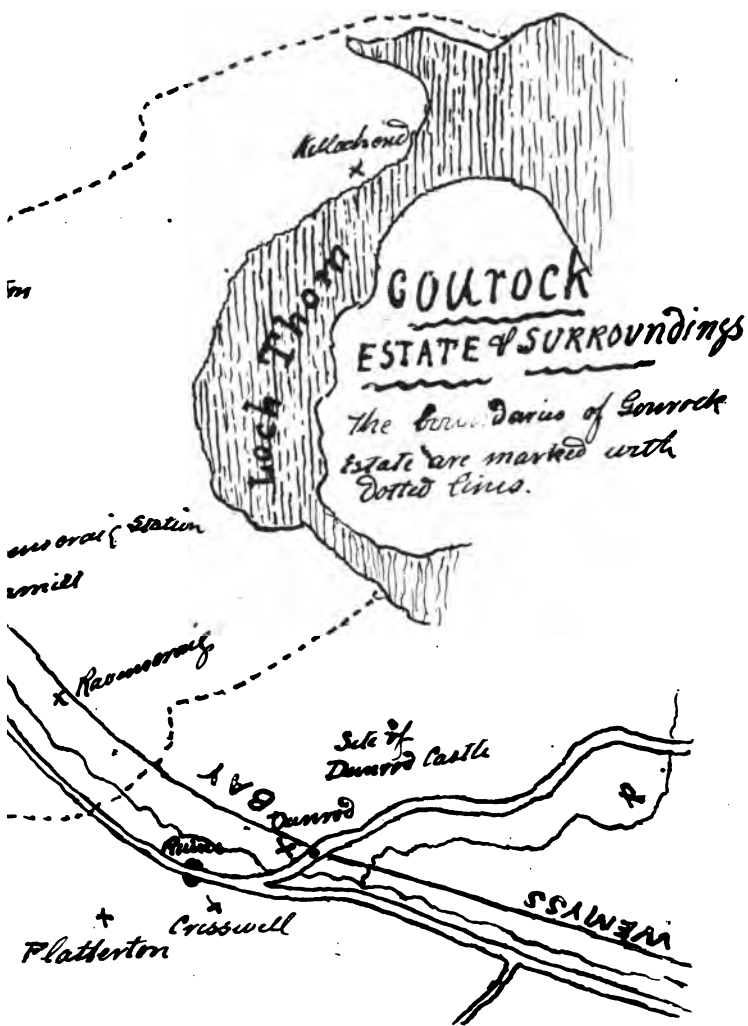
IV. GOUROCK CASTLE AND ESTATE.

The old Castle of Gourock, of which no traces now remain, except a portion of the foundations, seems to have been a small and unimportant stronghold, built, as far as is known, by one of the Earls of Douglas, to whom, down to the time of James II. (1455 A.D.), the lands of Finnart, including the estate of Gourock, belonged. The power of Douglas at that time overshadowed the power of the Throne itself. The King, hoping to rid himself of so dangerous a vassal, invited Douglas to Stirling Castle, where he murdered him with his own hand. The window by which he threw him out is still shown. The heir of the murdered Earl rose in revolt, and, assisted by the House of York, was soon at the head of an army of 4000 men.

The rebellion ended in defeat; Douglas had to fly, and his lands were forfeited. Most of them were given to the Earl of Angus, but the barony of Finnart, including the Castle and estate of Gourock, were granted to Sir David Stewart of Castlemilk, in whose family they remained for 300 years, till sold to Duncan Darroch in 1784. The barony was thereafter called the barony of Finnart-Stewart. The Stewarts, to whom for that long period Gourock belonged, and with whom Gourock Castle was a favourite resort, belonged to a family not only old but illustrious. They were descended from Sir John Stewart, the gallant knight who, under Sir William Wallace, commanded the Scottish archers at the battle of Falkirk, and was left







dead upon the field. The father of Sir David Stewart, who obtained Gourock in 1455, was also a Sir John, and inherited the heroic valour of the ancestor who fell at Falkirk. He fought in France in 1421 in the war with England, and at the battle of Beauge he made so valiant an attack on the English troops, commanded by the Duke of Clarence, and displayed so much personal prowess, that he got the motto *Avant*, and the sword in hand, which became from that time the crest of his family. This gallant soldier was killed at the battle of Verneuil, 1424, leaving behind him the son, Sir David Stewart, to whom James II. (as we have seen) gave the Castle and estate of Gourock from the forfeited lands of Earl Douglas.

About 1747 (a year or two after the collapse of the Highland rebellion under Prince Charlie) the old Castle of Gourock was taken down, and a mansion-house built, which forms a part of the present edifice. About 40 years later (viz., in 1784), Sir John Stewart of Castlemilk sold the mansion-house and estate to Duncan Darroch, whose great-grandson still owns it, though he has never made it his home.* The mansion-house is let at present (1880) to Colonel Latham of Greenock. Duncan Darroch bought the Gourock estate for a very small sum—about £5000. His great-grandson (it is understood) now draws from it in the shape of rent more every year than the whole of its original cost. The area of the estate is about 2700 acres.

* See foot-note, page 49.

V. WHAT GOUROCK HAS LIVED BY.

The first thing that drew attention to Gourock in olden times was its excellence as an anchorage. Centuries before such beings as "summer visitors" had existence, long before Gourock could boast of more than a few fishermen's huts, it was known as a safe and commodious harbour; the coracle of the Culdee missionary was often drawn up on its beach, and many a Danish warship and many a Scottish merchantman, running from the storm, cast anchor in the shelter of Gourock bay. Its position at the mouth of the Clyde gave it another permanent advantage. There was also good fishing in the river and firth. Under these favouring circumstances Gourock began early to grow into an important coast village.

More, however, with a prophetic eye to what it was going to be than owing to what it actually was, the lands of Gourock were incorporated as early as 1694 into a free barony, called the barony of Gourock, and Gourock itself was created a burgh of barony. The charter was granted by William and Mary, under the Great Seal of Scotland, to Sir William Stewart of Castle-milk, and his heirs.* It gave them the following powers, namely:—

"To rear, build, and enlarge the said town and burgh of barony, and to make and create burgesses within the said burgh ;

*Crawford's History of the Shire of Renfrew. Edited by Semple. 1782. Page 95. Even had summering at the coast been a fashion in those days, we can judge how scant the material

also with full power, faculty, privilege, and licence to the inhabitants of said burgh, present or future, who are or may be admitted and received free burgesses of the same by Sir William or his heirs, of buying and selling all kinds of legal merchandise, with full power to Sir William and his heirs of admitting and receiving within the said burgh all manner of merchants, handicraftsmen, or mechanics, to whom it shall be lawful to use their proper arts and callings, as freely, fully, and quietly in every respect as any other merchants, workmen, or mechanics, or others of the same stations or callings, can exercise for the time coming; with full power to Sir William and his heirs to elect, constitute, and appoint bailies, sergeants, and all other officers and members necessary to govern the same burgh yearly, and in all time coming: and if it be necessary, to rear, have, and hold a tolbooth, court, harbour, and port, within the foresaid burgh, in such places as the said Sir William and his heirs shall see expedient. And to hold therein a court and market weekly upon Tuesday; and two fairs yearly, the one upon the 12th of June o.s., to be called the summer fair of Gourock, and to continue for three days thereafter; and the other upon the 10th of November o.s., which is to be called St Martin's of Gourock."

In 1777 a ropework was started in Gourock, the covered parts of which are still to be seen, behind what is now called Cove Road, but was known till lately as Ropework Street. The work was carried on by a Company of Greenock merchants. The walk was the longest at that time in Scotland, being 200 fathoms, and slated half way along. In 1851 the works were removed to Port-Glasgow, where they are still carried on by the Birkmyres, but under the old name of the Gourock Ropework Company.

would have been, and how mighty a change has taken place on the Clyde since then, when we find, in 1656, one of Cromwell's officers of excise describing Glasgow as merely a "neat burgh town;" Port-Glasgow (then called Newark) as "a place with some four or five houses;" and Greenock as "such another, only the inhabitants more, but all seamen or fishermen, trading for Irelande in open boates."

Another early industry in Gourock was copper-mining. About 1780, as near as I can learn, an English Company arranged with Sir John Stewart of Castlemilk for the sinking of a copper mine in the valley behind the Tower Hill, in which, while search was being made for coal, copper had been discovered. Semple, in his "History of Renfrewshire," has the following note about it in 1782 :—

"The mine appears," he says, "to do very well at present. The copper is of a good quality when the ore is dug out, compounded of several heterogeneous substances. It is broke into small pieces (one of which my lady of Castlemilk made me a present of). It is afterwards washed, by which means it is disengaged from other soft bodies which clung to it. Then by straining and evaporation, and by the attraction of mercury, as I am given to understand, the copper is disunited from the ore. Part of said metal her ladyship also showed me." *

The copper mine has since then been wrought at intervals, but without success.

Gourock, however, occupies a more important niche in history in connection with quite another trade—the curing of red herrings. The first red herrings ever cured in Great Britain were cured at Gourock, behind the old corner-house to the left of the Quayhead, where the Registrar's Office is now. They were cured there by

* History, p. 97. In the same place he says, "There is also a lintseed or oil mill just now erecting at this place. There is a walk-mill or plash-mill, called Elie-mill, on the north side of the main road between Greenock and Innerkip, about a mile east of Flattertoun, all which being the property of the present Sir John Stewart of Castlemilk, and lying within the barony of Gourock. What is to be further observed, Mr Brown, the walker (as they are called), or the man who takes care of the walk-mill, is the 17th in a line from father to son who have been walkers, and has at present a son, dyer and walker in Perth, making the eighteenth."



rock as at other times is detached by a dozen. One blast has occasionally brought down thirty to sixty tons of rock. The Craigmuschat whinstone is held in high esteem, and has been largely used for paving the streets of Greenock, Paisley, and Glasgow.*

Gourock mainly depends, however, upon its attractions as a watering place. Many of the shops have a mere chrysalis existence during the winter months, and wake up only when the May sun, shining on sea and shore, begins to bring the denizens of the inland towns and cities down to the coast again. The fleets of pleasure boats that crowd the shores and swarm on the summer sea might for the most part be sold off but for the visitors, especially from Glasgow, who come down in crowds in July and August.† The churches also lean a good deal upon their summer congregations. The population of Gourock, which stands at about 3000 in winter, rises to 6000, and sometimes in prosperous times to 9000 in the heat of summer.

*The quarry is ordinarily worked with a double squad of quarrymen, to keep two stages going, 8 or 10 dressers are employed, and 4 or 5 breakers; but the total number varies from 10 to 40, according to the orders that are in. The turn-out of dressed stones is 160 to 200 tons per month. A man dresses on the average 4 tons a week, counting summer and winter together. Within the last two years the quarry has been worked back twenty feet.

† Queer stories are told at the expense of some of the less sophisticated visitors. One is of a good man from Kilbarchan, whose wife had been recommended to go to Gourock to try the "saut water" for her health. He accordingly took her down, and left her there. On his return the tide, which had been full the first time, was now far out. His eyes opened wide at the sight with amazement. When he had sufficiently recovered himself, he remarked that if his wife was no better it was not for want of taking plenty of the saut water.

VI. WHAT THE OLD INHABITANTS

REMEMBER.

Save for its natural features of hill and sea and shore, the Gourock of to-day bears little resemblance to the Gourock of forty or fifty years ago; and even these physical features have undergone important changes, owing especially to the planting of wood.

The oldest inhabitants of Gourock tell of the time when, with the exception of one little farm cottage, there was no house west of Kempoch except Bentley's Folly, which at that time was a beautiful spot, with its battlemented house and wall and bridge, its bowers overhung with creeping plants, its walks laid with snow-white gravel, its magnificent moss-house, its heather-house, its green terraces, its gold fish ponds, and its gardens.*

All along Ashton Bay there was no other house. The sides of the coast road were fresh and green; fields stretched along the foot of the hill where the houses

* The place was sometimes spoken of as "Bentley's Miscellany." Poor Bentley, who was an Englishman, and had made his money as a cotton broker in Glasgow, lavished (it is said) more than £20,000 upon the house and grounds; and partly by his reckless expenditure, partly through speculation, ruined himself, and died in the poorhouse. In the days of his prosperity, a friend who remembers him says that his equipage was one of the most stylish in the city. When his ruin came and he dropped out of view, and sank at last to be a pauper in the City Poorhouse, his old friend, Councillor John Forrester of Gordon Street, found

are now continuous ; the hillsides were bare both of houses and woods, having no covering except here and there bramble bushes, or patches of whin brightening the hillsides in early summer with their blossoms of yellow gold. The cows from Midton Farm came down every day to be milked on the fields by the Ashton shore, where the U.P. Church and contiguous buildings now stand.*

About Kempoch Point there was only one little cluster of houses. There was no pier like the present one in those days ; only a stone jetty, where the fishing boats landed, and passengers embarked in flat barges—bumboats as they were called—and were pulled out to those ancient prodigies of slowness known as fly-boats ; and afterwards to the “Comet” and other

him there when making an official round. After his first expression of sorrowful astonishment, he asked Bentley if he found himself at all comfortable in the house. “Yes, yes,” said Bentley ; “but changed days, Mr Forrester, changed days !” On further inquiry as to his comfort, Bentley said, “There’s just one thing I miss very much, Mr Forrester. When I get up in the morning, I feel the want of my dressing-gown.” Mr Forrester, before leaving, gave orders to get a dressing-gown made for him. When he saw him again, Bentley thanked him, in his gentlemanly way :—“Very kind of you,” he said ; “I feel so comfortable now in the mornings.” Though Bentley’s place at Gourrock is hardly recognisable now on the landward side, it is still there, on the ground opposite the U.P. Church. The greater part of the ground was recovered from the sea ; and it was owing to the failure that again and again followed Bentley’s costly attempts to keep the sea back that the name of “Bentley’s Folly” was given.

* Midton Farm was tenanted at that time by a Mr Ritchie, who spent his whole life there, and died in the bed in which he was born. When his cows were being milked in the fields by Ashton shore, the children of the villagers, and those down “for the salt water” used to come with their cans and “tinnies” to get the milk fresh from the cow.

steamers almost as slow, which turned daily into Gourrock Bay to take in and put off passengers.*

Twenty or thirty families in the little village depended for their livelihood upon fishing. The fishermen's boats used to be drawn up on the sheltered shore between Kempoch Point and the bridge; and the beach where Adams' boatyard and the Eastern Coal Depot now stand used to be piled with mussel shells—that being the place where the fishermen baited their lines. The shore between that and Kempoch Point (now partly covered by the pier, and the rest disfigured by sheds and covered by *débris* from the quarries) was at that time a beautiful beach of white sand and pebbles. Herring was so abundant in the Clyde in those days that it was a current saying that

* Old John Ritchie, who had often seen the "Comet," declared to Hugh Macdonald that her movements were so slow even at full speed that a single rower in a boat could have made up to and pulled round it. In the "Book of Days" (vol. ii., 220) a curious picture is given of the first "Comet," along with the following notes:—"On the 15th of August 1812 there appeared in the *Greenock Advertiser* an announcement signed Henry Bell, and dated from the Helensburgh Baths, making the public aware that thereafter a steam passage boat, the Comet, would ply on the Clyde between Glasgow and Greenock, leaving the former city on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and the latter on the other lawful days of the week; the terms—4s for the best cabin, and 3s for the second. This vessel, one of only twenty-five tons burden, had been prepared in the building yard of John and Charles Wood, Port Glasgow, during the previous winter, at the instance of the above-mentioned Henry Bell, who was a simple, uneducated man, of an inventive and speculative turn of mind, who amused himself with projects, while his more practical wife kept a hotel and suite of baths at a Clyde watering-place. The application of steam to navigation had been experimentally proved twenty-four years before by Mr Patrick Miller, a Dumfriesshire gentleman, under the suggestion of Mr James Taylor, and with the engineering assistance of Mr Alexander Symington. More recently a steamer had been put into regular use by Mr Robert Fulton on the Hudson river in America. But

the Gourock people did not think it worth while to go out for them unless they were plentiful enough to be felt with a stick ! One Gourockian remembers, when a boy, going out with a companion, dropping their net, and going ashore to play. After a few games they drew their net ashore with 800 fish in it. The Gourock fishermen now—such as there are—generally go across to Loch Long, where fish is more abundant ; and where they catch ling, hake, haddocks, cod, skate, and flounder, with now and then a stray lobster.

Though the portion of Gourock between Kempoch Point and the mussel dyke is the oldest, it boasted

this little Comet of Henry Bell, of Helensburgh Baths, was the first example of a steamboat brought into serviceable use within European waters. In its proposed trip of five-and-twenty miles it is understood to have been successful as a commercial speculation, insomuch that presently after other and larger vessels of the same kind were built and set agoing on the Clyde. It is an interesting circumstance that steam navigation thus sprung up in a practical form almost on the spot where James Watt, the illustrious improver of the steam engine, was born. This eminent man appears never to have taken any active concern in the origination of steam navigation ; but so early as 1816, when he in old age paid a visit to his native town of Greenock, he went in one of the new vessels to Rothesay and back, an excursion which then occupied the greater portion of a whole day. Mr Williamson, in his *Memorials of James Watt*, relates an anecdote of his trip. Mr Watt entered into conversation with the engineer of the boat, pointing out to him the method of backing the engine. With a foot-rule he demonstrated to him what was meant. Not succeeding, however, he at last, under the impulse of the ruling passion, threw off his overcoat, and putting his hand to the engine himself, showed the practical application of his lecture. Previously to this, the backstroke of the steamboat engine was either not known or not generally acted on. The practice was to stop the engine entirely a considerable time before the vessel reached the point of mooring, in order to allow for the gradual and natural diminution of her speed." Captain M'Kinnon, of Gourock, has a model of "Comet No. 1," which he got from Henry Bell in 1830. He said her speed was seldom more than 5 miles an hour, and she could not stem a breeze.

very few houses in those days. With the exception of Castlemilk House,* they were all thatched, and had little yards behind, in one of which was a place for boiling bark, to bark the fishermen's nets. A large fine tree, known as "the Gourock tree," a few yards west from where the Gamble Institute stands now, caught the eye as a conspicuous object approaching either by land or water; and even when houses began to spring up to east and west around the bay, it remained the landmark. Houses were described as being so far on this or the other side of "the Gourock tree." The old tree has long since passed away.

The houses of fashionable resort in Gourock at that time were "the Bay houses," now the dirtiest corner in the village, and popularly known as "Irish Row." To those houses in their palmy days, and to those still standing and projecting into the street on the other side of the road, equally old and almost equally dirty, the Glasgow ministers and professors used to come down sixty years ago to rusticate. When they came by the little steamers that used to ply in those days, the "bumboat" landed them and their families at the mussel dyke. The shore about the mussel dyke was at that time a white gravelly beach. There was no road round by the water's edge at the point where the shore road crosses the water near Cove Point House; and people had to cross on stepping-stones, or wade.

The first house built in that part of the bay was Berry Burn, now (1880) occupied by Miss Liddell, and

* This house, bearing date 1699, still stands, in Shore Street, but is subdivided and let in portions.

built by her father more than fifty years ago. It stands on the boundary line between Greenock and Gourrock. Part of the ground is in Gourrock, on the property of Mr Darroch, and part of it in Greenock, on the property of Sir Michael Shaw Stewart. A fine walnut tree in the garden stands on the Gourrock side of the burn, but stretches its arms over into the "West Parish." Miss Liddell told me that she remembered, when she was a girl, the active trade that used to be carried on in the curing of fish at White Foreland Point (a little way from Berry Burn), where Fort Matilda now stands. She remembers the smack-loads of fish that used to be disembarked on the point; the tents for the watchers; and the fires kept burning all night. Children from the village used to be employed at 4d. a day in turning the fish and helping to pack them.

There is, or was, a little house in the old burying-ground, on the side opposite the gate, which was long a memento of the days when churchyards used to be entered by night, and newly filled graves robbed of their ghastly contents, which were carried off to be sold to the doctors. That house was the watch-house; and an old Gourrockian told me he well remembered taking his turn there to watch through the night, after a burial had taken place. The rule was that the friends of the dead had for six weeks to put on a fire in the watch-house, and have a candle burning. The watch consisted of three men, who were armed with sticks, and had one gun amongst them.

It was found, however, in the fruit season, that the watchers would need to be themselves watched, as they

not unfrequently left the bodies to take care of themselves, while they went and plundered the orchards of a gentleman known as the Black Prince, who stayed in what is now known as Irish Row, beside the Cove Gardens.

In old days a good deal of smuggling went on in Gourock. The venerable author of the "Judicial Records of Renfrewshire" sends me the following reminiscence bearing on this point :—

"In my infancy, and until about ten years of age, I was each summer taken with the other members of my father's family to Gourock. We resided at Kempoch Point, in the low flat of a house (three storeys high behind and two in front) occupied by a shoemaker. There was only a thatched house and the tenement we lived in at Kempoch Point at that time. The souter, our landlord, was not contented 'to stick by his awl,' as an industrious cobbler ought, but, like not a few of the good folks along the coast from Greenock to Ayr, was given to trading in articles not marked by the broad arrow of the Customs or Excise, but of which ('tell it not in Gath') my father, though one of the most loyal of subjects, sometimes availed himself, for the sake of his Paisley friends. I recollect, when I might be about six or eight years old, being taken by the shoemaker in his boat (for he found it useful to keep one) to Roseneath, where sundry small casks or kegs were concealed, one of which he got into the boat and brought to Kempoch. Whether the article was rum, or the produce of the 'sma still'—much prized in those days by 'the Seesties'—I cannot now tell. But I know

that, whatever it was, great care was taken to have it quietly and speedily conveyed to Paisley, where, at the Baron's, it formed one of the ingredients in the then universal 'Paisley pap,' namely, whisky and swipes."

Gourock more than once in bygone days had a visit from the press-gang. Under the sanction of laws which even now only slumber (for they are not repealed) gangs of man-of-war's men, armed to the teeth, used to make descents upon any part of the coast where likely men were to be found, to seize them and drag them away for service in the royal navy. Port towns like Greenock, and fishing villages like Gourock, were especially liable to attacks of this kind, from the number of seafaring men always to be found there. The old inhabitants of Gourock preserve a tradition of one of these descents. The gang had run their boats into Gourock bay one winter afternoon, and surrounded a change-house, where they got hold of several stalwart lads, whom they immediately marched to the beach to carry them off for His Majesty's service. The news spread like wildfire along the little village; men and women turned out to the rescue, attacked the gang with volleys of stones, compelled them to surrender the captives, and drove them to their boats.

Religion has also its press-gangs, and Gourock, more than once, has had unhappy experience of them. I have been told of a time about thirty years ago when the Greenock carpenters rose against the Catholics, and after wrecking the chapel and priest's house, made their way down to Gourock. Here they entered the houses, especially of suspected persons, and demanded that they

should "curse the Pope," or take the consequences. Amongst those who refused was a little man of the name of Charles Duffy, who drove his fortune before him in the shape of a barrow of fish. Duffy was seized and carried to the old quay, where a rope was tied round him and he was tossed over. On being pulled out, he was again called upon to curse the Pope, but Charlie was firm, and said he would sooner drown. After a severe handling, they let him go. The Catholics afterwards took reprisals; and I remember an old man, a labourer, who used to be pointed out to me as the Protestant who was put in Duffy's place when the day of retribution came. The consequence in both cases was what it usually is—the cause of true religion suffered, and party feeling on both sides was embittered.

Winter life in Gourrock in those days was livelier, at least in proportion to its population, than it is now. The ropework, the fishing, and the quarries kept the people employed; there was plenty of football and shinty playing; the boys had sliding on Mossclave; and at night it was not a Templar Lodge or a Quaker meeting that assembled in John Hall's tavern at Kempoch Point. On Hogmanay night it was one of the freaks of the Gourrock lads to go and array Granny Kempoch in shawl, mutch, and apron, that she might appear in dress on New Year's morning.

When summer came, it brought then, as now, though on a smaller scale, an invasion of holiday-seekers from Glasgow and Paisley. These people, however, had very few of the facilities for getting to Gourrock that exist in such abundance now. A residenter in old

Gourock sends me the following note :—" Before the era of railways, or cars, it was a considerable undertaking to reach the village in safety. Having duly secured one of the best houses to let—one called the Old Court House, opposite the old quay (and in the laundry of which the first red herrings were cured)—then arose the question about our transport down. We required to make an early start, the time occupied in travelling from Paisley being from seven o'clock in the morning till five in the afternoon. Our conveyance was the carrier's cart, well known in those days as 'John Hood's Caravan.' Into this vehicle all our goods were first stowed, then the children, with all the little articles needed for the long journey. Arriving at the half-way house, a rest was taken ; and on reaching a town where the first sight of the 'saut water' was got, visions arose before us of all the delights of holiday time at the coast, mingled with less pleasing anticipations of early morning dips in the chill water. As the 'Caravan' only made the journey once a week, its arrival was always an event in Gourock."

Within a few years of that time, partly as the result of the enormous increase of wealth and population in the west of Scotland, and especially in Glasgow, the number of summer visitors and residents at the coast greatly increased, and Gourock, which got its share, was soon brought into closer connection with the centres of population. Twenty years ago, the journey from Glasgow to Gourock was made as speedily as it is now, or is likely to be till the railway comes to Gourock itself. Those who travelled up and down in those

days (especially when Clark and the Limited Company ran the competition 'buses) tell how they used to flash down from the railway station at Greenock—the admiration of all beholders, and the terror of everybody on the road—reaching Gourrock within sixty-five minutes of the time when the train left Glasgow. "But," as one of them said, "no rose is without its thorn. The race was sometimes too exciting, and occasionally ended in a smash, and a 'free coup' over the hedge."

This chapter should not close without a reference to John Kelso Hunter, whose "Retrospect of an Artist's Life" received the cordial praise of Carlyle, as a faithful transcript of west country manners. Hunter spent his closing years at Gourrock. He resided in the upper flat of the house facing the quay, the ground floor of which was occupied by the Bank. It was there that he wrote his second volume, entitled, "Life Studies." When his "Retrospect" appeared, Mr Robert Buchanan, the poet, was sojourning in the village, and wrote an elaborate critique of the volume for the *Athenæum*, which greatly promoted its success. The book was edited by Mr Hunter's friend, the Rev. W. H. Wylie, who lived at that time in Ashton, and whose contributions to the newspaper press then and since have made multitudes his debtors who may yet be unfamiliar with his name. It was at Mr Wylie's request that the autobiography was undertaken by the quaint old painter, and to him it was dedicated. Mr Hunter died in the February of 1873.

VII. THE GOUROCK CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS.

Established Church.—Gourock being in the parish of Inverkip, the Established Church people had in old times to walk three miles or more to the Parish Church in Inverkip village. This inconvenience became increasingly felt as the population in and around the village of Gourock increased.

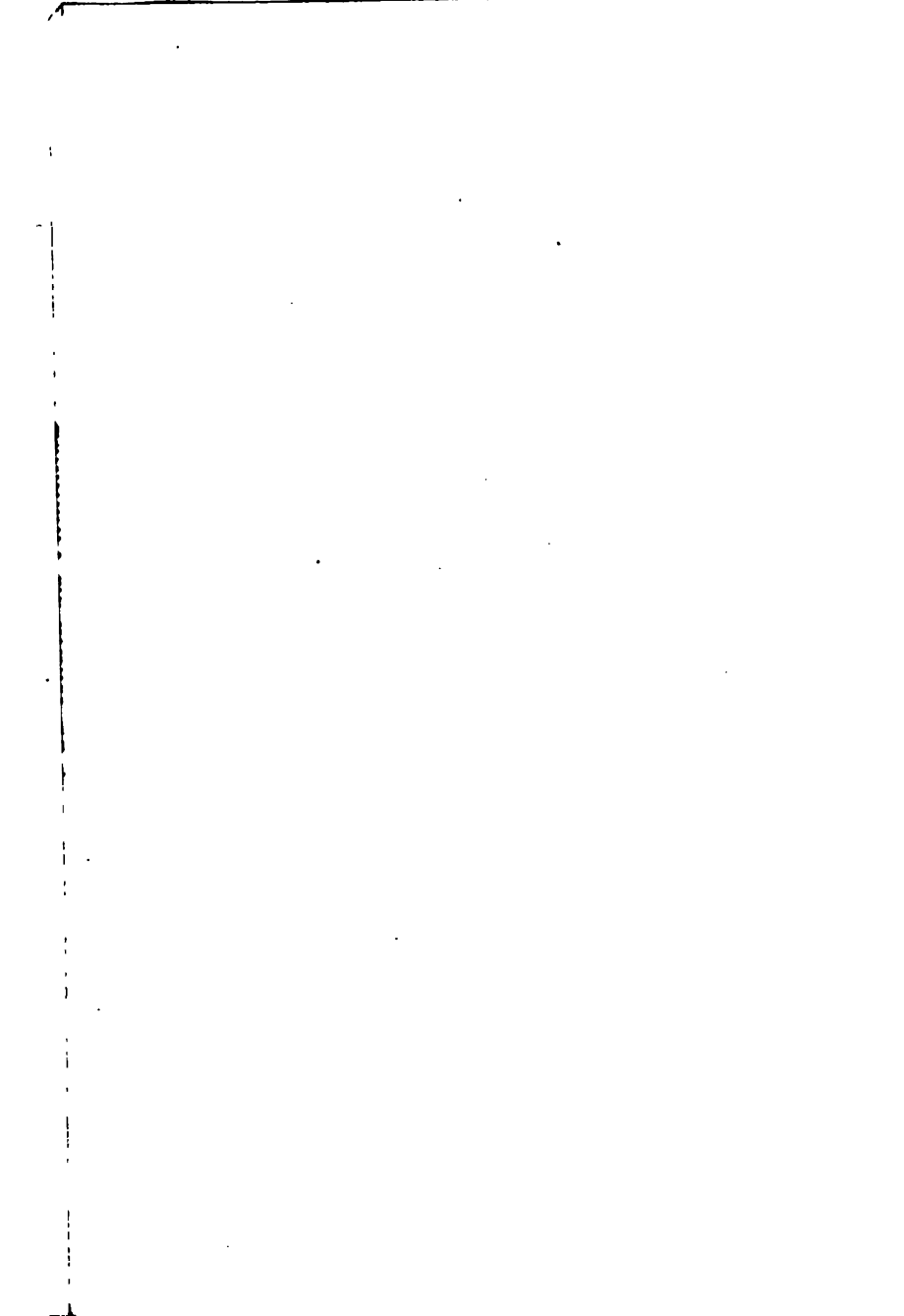
Accordingly a preaching station was commenced, and in 1776 or thereabout a chapel of ease was erected on part of the ground now enclosed within the walls of the old graveyard on the opposite side of the road from the Eastern School. Hence the name, there, of Chapel Street. Part of the old wall abutting on the road formed a portion of the gable. It was a very small place of worship, with earthen floor, and only partially seated with rough benches. It had no vestry; and old "Baldie Cameron," the rope-spinner, who rang the bell, had to perform his work standing in the corner of the little church amongst the congregation.

The following are the names of the ministers who officiated in succession in that little chapel :—Rev. M. Turner; Rev. Jas. Wilson; Rev. Archd. Anderson; Rev. James Greenock; Rev. W. Gemmell; Rev. Coll Turner.

Although there were many dissenters even then, who walked away to the Old Light Burgher Church



Established Church from off Quarry Quay



at Cartsdyke* every Sabbath, the Gourock chapel was soon found too small for the growing congregation; and it was no uncommon thing in summer to see a number of the people, who were unable to get access, sitting on the tombstones in the little graveyard, listening to the preaching that was going on within.

In 1833 the Rev. Donald M'Leod was ordained as regular minister; and the present Established Church was built, crowning the little street to which it has given the name of "Church Street." In 1857 Gourock was erected into a parish *quoad sacra*; the hall and rooms behind the Church were added in 1874; and in 1877 a manse was purchased, mainly through the kindness of Mrs Gamble, then of Ashburn. The following are the names of the successive ministers:— Rev. Donald M'Leod; Rev. Duncan H. Weir; Rev. J. M'Ilwraith; Rev. Jas. Sommerville; Rev. R. Macnair; Rev. Geo. M'Corkindale; Rev. Jno. Yuille; Rev. J. H. M'Culloch.

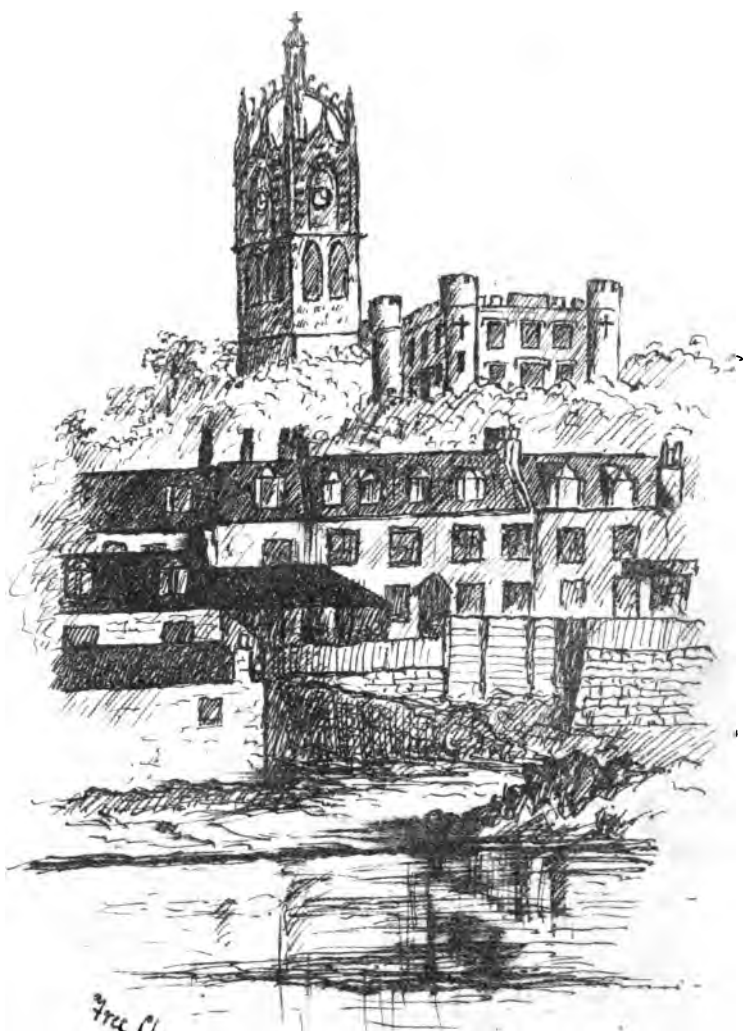
* Cartsdyke is distant from Gourock about four miles. It is noteworthy as the birthplace of Jean Adams, who wrote the song, "There's nae luck about the house." She died in the Glasgow hospital, a friendless pauper, in 1765. At Cartsdyke also was born the James Macrae who erected the equestrian statue of King William at Glasgow Cross. He left his country a poor boy, and rose in India to rank and fortune, becoming Governor of Madras. Daniel Weir, in his "History of Greenock," published in 1829 (page 56), has the following note—"In connection with Cartsdyke we may also state:—A little above the house of Cartsburn stood a cottage that gave birth to the celebrated donor of the equestrian statue of King William to the City of Glasgow, James Macrae, who was long herd to the tenant of Hill-end, the great-grandfather of H. Crawford. Tradition says that Macrae offered to place the statue in Cartsdyke; but the then laird of Cartsburn (a very godly man) rejected it, wishing, in preference, that the influence of Mr Macrae might be exercised to have Cartsdyke made a parish. This Mr Macrae became the ancestor of the families of Glencairn, Orangefield, Houston, and Don. He lies interred in the churchyard of Monkton."

The first ordained minister, Mr M'Leod, "went out" at the Disruption, and after four years' service as Free Church minister, went to America, but afterwards returned, and died in Gourrock. His successor, Mr Weir, became Professor of Hebrew in Glasgow University. Mr M'Ilwraith is now Established Church minister at Erskine, and Mr Somerville at Irvine; Mr Macnair is a doctor of medicine at Leith. Mr M'Corkindale was lost on Mont Blanc, and lies buried at Chamouni.* Mr Yuille, after four years' service at Gourrock, fell into ill-health, and died in his father's house at Irvine. Mr M'Culloch, the present incumbent, was settled in October 1875.

Free Church.—At the time of the Disruption the Established Church minister, as we have seen, was the Rev. Donald M'Leod.† He and a considerable portion of his congregation, including the Darrochs of Gourrock, followed the Disruption party out of the Established Church; and a Free Church, with a school und

* Mr M'Corkindale was born at Rothesay in 1828; studied at Glasgow University; and was settled in Gourrock in 1855. His death on Mont Blanc took place in September 1870. The following were the words he wrote for a friend when perishing in the snow :—"Mont Blanc, 7th September, evening.—We have been on Mont Blanc for two days in a terrible snow-storm. Lost our way (égarés). Are in a cave dug out of the snow, 15,000 feet high. Have no hope of descending. Perhaps this book will be found and sent to you." (Then follow some words relating to his private affairs.) "We have no provisions. My feet are already frozen, and I am utterly exhausted (épuisé). I have only strength to write these few words. I die believing in Jesus, with sweet thoughts of my family. My love to all. I hope that we shall meet in heaven.—Ever thine."

† Mr M'Leod had great difficulty in making anything of old Ritchie the porter. Meeting him one day he said :—"I never see you in church, John?" "And neither do I see you, sir," was John's reply—under the circumstances strictly true.



Free Church from off Kemboch

it, was built at the corner of John Street and Royal Street. There the congregation worshipped till 1857, when the present church was erected; the manse having been built five years before. The Church was formally opened on June 14th, by Dr Julius Wood of Dumfries, Moderator of the F. C. General Assembly for that year. The tower was added in 1877. The following are the names of the successive ministers:—Rev. Donald M'Leod; Rev. William Fraser; Rev. Robert M'Ellar; and Rev. Arch. Russell, now of Kinning Park Free Church, Glasgow.

Mr M'Ellar, who died in 1875, though little known beyond the places where he laboured, was a scholar, a thinker, and a man of infinite wit. A volume of his sermons was published soon after his death, with a biographical sketch prefixed by Professor Bruce.*

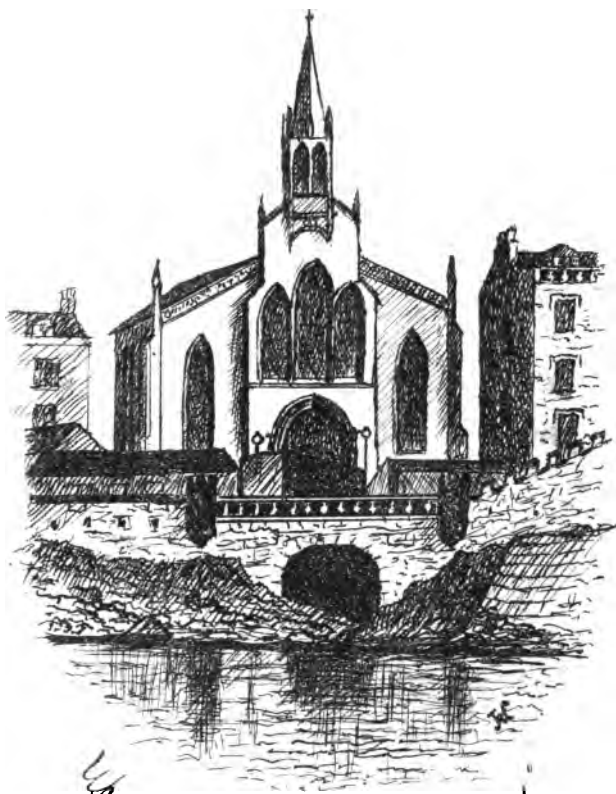
United Presbyterian Church.—The U.P. Church was built in 1848, the year after the union of the Secession and Relief Churches. The manse was built eleven

* These, however, give no idea of his *fun*, which was one of the most abounding and charming elements in his conversation. I wish some of his jokes could have been preserved; but they were not easily detached from the circumstances. One or two recur to me. There was a big Highlander in Gourrock who was very proud of two things, his Gaelic and his bushy whiskers. Mr M'Ellar was bantering him one day about his bad pronunciation of the Gaelic. The Highlander was touched on a sensitive point, and began to get angry. "But it's all owing to your whiskers," said Mr M'Ellar, whenever he saw this. "Your Gaelic is good enough. But who could ever get good Gaelic through such whiskers!" The Highlander's irritation vanished before a smile of delight. The one thing that he was prouder of than his Gaelic was his big beard.—At a School Board meeting, where we had much talk about a "nominee," and proceeded afterwards to speak of a case of kicking, I remember the sudden effect upon the solemnity of the Board when Mr M'Ellar

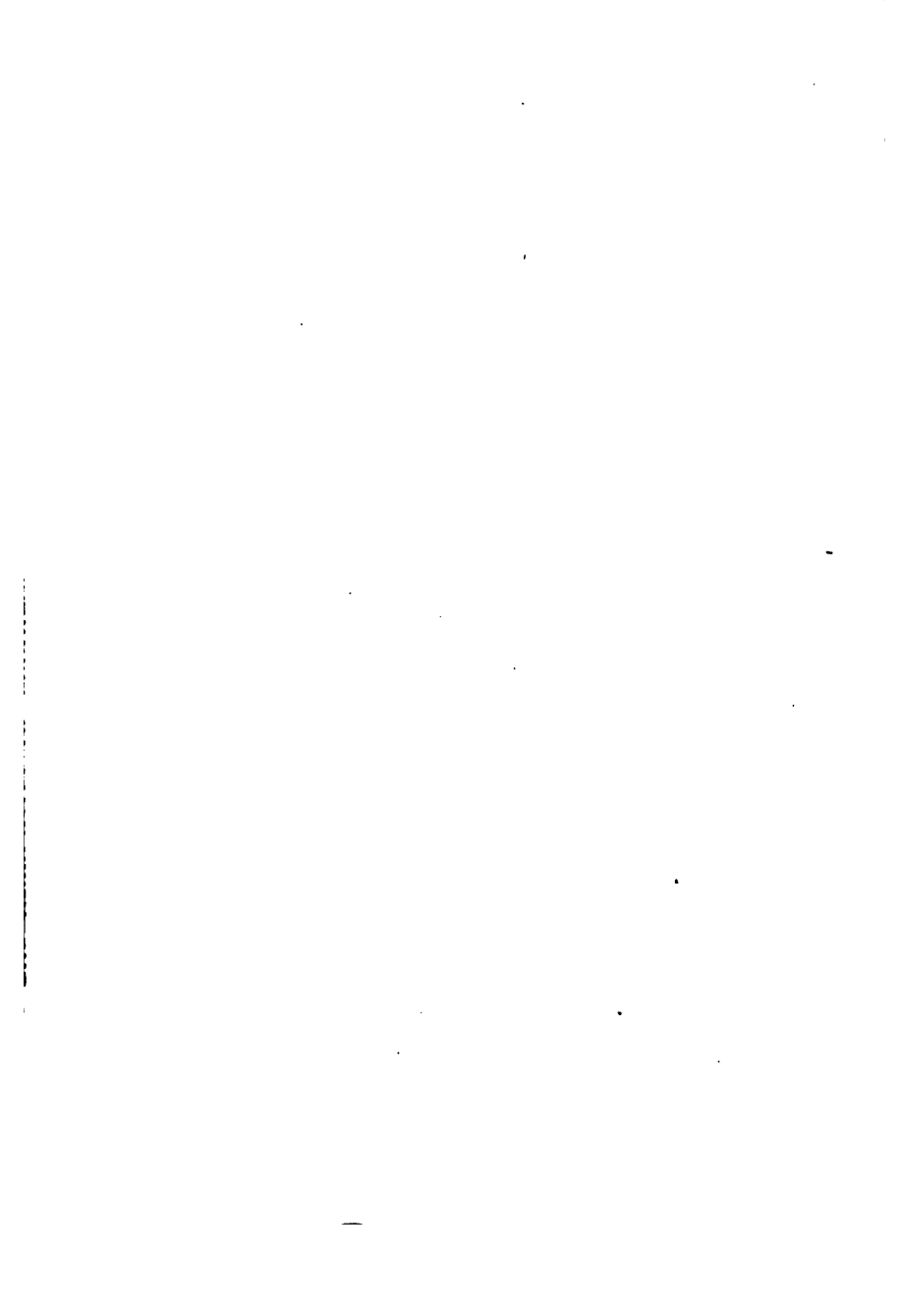
years later. The following are the names of the successive ministers :—Rev. J. M'Donald ; Rev. George Sandie ; Rev. George Morrison ; Rev. David Macrae ; Rev. George Rae.

Mr M'Donald died at the early age of 27, after being only four years in the ministry. Mr Sandie (author of "Horeb and Jerusalem") removed to London in 1864, and died in 1879. Mr Morrison demitted his charge in 1871, was afterwards settled in Brechin, but died suddenly, at the house of Dr Marshall of Coupar Angus, in 1874. A posthumous volume of his sermons was published, with biographical prelude by Rev. Fergus Ferguson, of Queen's Park, Glasgow. Mr Macrae was ordained and settled in Gourock in April 1872 ; and laboured in the place for seven years. In 1876 he commenced in the Church Courts the movement for Creed reform, which issued in 1879 in the important modification of the Westminster Standards known in the United Presbyterian Church as "The Declaratory Act." It involved, however, the termination of his connection with Gourock. One of the reforms which

began to refer to the person who had received the kick, as "the kickee."—One evening at a charade, Mr M'Ellar was required to take the part of a Secretary reading the Annual Report. He at once took a sheet of paper to represent the report, and (inventing as he went along) read, in a loud voice, the report of various imaginary cases, keeping the company in roars of laughter. The only case I can recall was this :—"November 9.—Janet M'Lush, brought in with bad squint. Eyes drawn together. Had tried physicians ; but squint declared incurable. Case was taken in hand by your medical officer. Two glasses of whisky were got and held at point of woman's nose. They were then slowly separated. One eye followed each glass, till they were drawn quite away from one another. Cure complete." Mr M'Ellar's fun, however, was but the sunshine and sparkle upon the surface of a deep and true and thoughtful life.



Up. Church from off 'Bentley's Folly'



he insisted upon, as demanded in the interests of truth and honesty, was explicit right to dissent from the Westminster dogma of everlasting and unspeakable torment after death. This right the Synod not only refused, but at a special meeting, called in July 1879, expelled Mr Macrae from the denomination, without allowing him a formal trial, which would have involved the testing of the dogma by Scripture. The majority of his congregation in Gourock resented the action of the Synod, and the church doors were closed against its deputy on the Sunday following, namely, the 27th of July.*

Congregational Church.—In October 1879 Mr Macrae went to Dundee as successor to the Rev. George Gilfillan, whose congregation had called him in the month of May preceding, and now left the United Presbyterian Church in order to adhere to him. A large portion of the Gourock congregation also seceded, and formed themselves into an Independent Church. Services were commenced in the Gamble Institute on November 16th, 1879; and the church was formally recognised as in fellowship with the Congregational Union of Scotland on the 27th of January 1880.

Episcopal Church.—In May 1856 a Scottish Episcopal mission was commenced in Gourock in what was

* For a complete history of this case see "The Macrae Case," published by Marr & Sons, Glasgow, and "Macrae's Church Standards," a copy of which is in the Watt Library, Greenock. For full reports of the closing of the Church against the Synod's deputy, and what followed, see Glasgow or Greenock papers of July 28th, August 18th, and September 29th, 1879.

then the School of Industry, Adelaide Street. The present church (St Bartholomew's), which stands at the top of Glencairn Road, was built in 1857, and consecrated by Dr Trower, Scottish Episcopal Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, on August 24th—St Bartholomew's Day. For several years the church was only open during three or four months in summer, but in 1874 the Bishop licensed a Lay Reader, after which services were conducted every Sunday throughout the year. In 1878 Rev. Mr Leveson was appointed as regular clergyman, conducting services throughout the year both at Gourock and Cartsdyke.

Roman Catholic Church.—Most of the Roman Catholics in Gourock are from Ireland, or of Irish descent. For several years they have maintained a separate school, but were without a church till 1879, when the handsome edifice in Royal Street was built. The School connected with the Church was opened in July 1880.

The Schools.—The Education Act led to great improvement in the public schools in Gourock.

Previous to the Disruption the principal school in the place was the old parish school in Bath Street. It was a poor building, consisting of one room, and a melancholy little enclosure outside, sinking below the level of the street, and called the playground. Many good scholars, however, came out of that school, which for nearly forty years prior to the Education Act was taught by Mr Whyte, who also officiated as Session-Clerk and Inspector of the Poor.*

* Prior to Mr Whyte's time, the school was taught by a Mr Cameron. Another school was taught in Shore Street by a Mr

In 1844 the Free Church opened its school in John Street, which soon became the principal school in the village. Its earlier teachers were Messrs Mackie, Muirhead, Mackenzie, and Kerr. From 1863, down to the time when it ceased to be a denominational school, it was taught by Mr Donald Brown, now Head-master of the Central School under the Board. There was also a Female Industrial School in Adelaide Street, with teacher's rooms above, and with an endowment of £25 a-year left by Mr Rainy, who had married a sister of Mrs Major Darroch. For many years it was at a very low ebb, but on the appointment of a certificated teacher in 1873 it revived, and was soon crowded. The school was transferred to the Board in 1877, and on the completion of the Central School the teachers and scholars were transferred, and the old building abandoned. The Education Act came into operation in Gourock in 1873. Thereafter two handsome new schools were built,—the

Spiers, in the little house now used as a boatshed, across the street from the Gamble Institute. An old residenter says that in those days during the greater part of the year both boys and girls went barefooted. A pair of shoes amongst them was almost as rare a sight as a black swan. Literary tastes on the part of the teachers in those days do not seem—at least in Greenock—to have been highly valued. Leyden, in his "Life of John Wilson," author of "The Clyde," states that the Magistrates of Greenock when they appointed him head-teacher of the Grammar School made it a condition that he should give up "the profane and unprofitable art of poem-making." The local press, however, must have made up for this by maintaining in its "poets' corner" (if all stories are true) a standard of unexampled excellence—for when Thomas Campbell, the poet, then a tutor in the West Highlands, sent to the *Greenock Advertiser* of that time the MS. of "Hohenlinden," the Editor, in his "Notices to Correspondents," intimated to the literary aspirant that his verses, were declined as being "scarcely up to the mark of the *Advertiser*."

Eastern in Chapel Street, in place of the old Parish School, and the Central in John Street, in place of the old Free Church School. There are two certificated teachers in the Eastern, and three in the Central—one drill instructor serves for both. Besides the Board Schools there is the school opened by the Catholics, and two or three private schools. Notwithstanding these facilities, a number of boys and girls go up daily to the Academies in Greenock.*

*The members of the first Gourock School Board were:—Messrs Binnie, Turner, and Stirling; Mrs Gamble; and Rev. Messrs Yuille, M'Ellar, and Macrae. The members of the present Board are—Provost Binnie (Chairman); Messrs M'Whirter, Haldane, and Simpson; Dr Wyllie; and Rev. J. H. M'Culloch. The present teachers of the Board Schools are:—*Central School*—Donald Brown, Robert Dickie, and Helen M'Lean; with three pupil teachers. *Eastern School*—Robert Fulton and Agnes Harris, with two pupil teachers. Drill instructor for both schools—J. S. Adams. The average attendance in the Central School is 260. In the Eastern School the average attendance, which was 54 when the school was opened in 1877, is now 156. The attendance at the *Roman Catholic School* (teacher, Annie M'Laughen) is 34. The number of children in Gourock within the school age (5 to 13) is 500. Of these 440 are on the roll of the Board Schools.

VIII. GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL INSTITUTIONS.

The Local Government is in the hands of Burgh Commissioners, three of whom are Magistrates, the senior one receiving the title of Provost.

In 1858 (April 13) Gourock adopted the Police Act of 1850. In 1877 (August 20) it adopted the "General Improvement (Scotland) Act" of 1862; and under the powers conferred by this Act on the Commissioners, the houses have been numbered, the streets named, and the footpaths, which long remained in a ragged and discreditable state, have been paved. These and other improvements—most of them carried out since the present Provost (Mr Binnie) came into office—have added greatly to the convenience and attractiveness of the little burgh. The following is a list of the Senior Magistrates or Provosts of the Burgh of Gourock since 1858, when the Police Act was adopted:—(1) Mr William Robertson, elected 10th May 1858; (2) Mr Adam Roxburgh, elected 13th June 1859; (3) Mr James Alexander, elected 13th May 1861—Mr Alexander resigned 25th July 1863; (4) Major Darroch, elected 25th July 1863—the Major died on 13th October 1864, and the office was left vacant till 15th May 1865; (5) Mr John Burnet, elected 15th May 1865—Mr Burnet held office till his death on 10th November 1873; (6) Mr Robert Kinross, elected 20th December 1873;

(7) Mr William Millar, elected 19th May 1875; (8) Mr Robert Binnie, the present Provost, elected 22d May 1877.*

The annual value of property within the burgh is about £23,600, but £2526 of this is exempted from assessment. Every penny, therefore, of taxation yields about £87.†

Gourock has a station for county constabulary; a Rifle Corps (the 22d Renfrewshire); a Coastguard Station ‡; a Post-Office, with Telegraph and Post-Office Savings Bank, a Union Branch Bank—succeeding the ill-fated City of Glasgow, which, in turn, had taken the place of the equally ill-fated Western Bank. Gourock

*The following are the present Magistrates and Commissioners:—*Provost (or Senior Magistrate)*—Robert Binnie, Esq. *Bailies (or Junior Magistrates)*—Messrs Lapsley and Steel. *Commissioners*—Messrs Binnie, Haldane, Lapsley, Steel, M'Whirter, Given, Witherspoon, Gossman, and Wallace.

† The present rates of assessment (1880) are as follows:—Poor rates, 3½d per pound on owners, and 3½d on occupiers; registration, one-eighth of a penny on owners, one-sixth of a penny on occupiers; burial ground, three-twelfths of a penny on owners, four-twelfths on occupiers; school rates, 3½d on owners, the same on occupiers; county rates, 1½d on owners, 1d on occupiers; property tax, 5d on owners; police assessments, 1s 4½d on occupiers; general improvement rate, one halfpenny per pound on owners, same on occupiers; public health rate, 4½d on occupiers. Altogether, in Gourock the taxes amount to something over 3s. in the pound; in Greenock they amount to over 6s.

‡ At this station there is a fogbell for the guidance of ships in thick weather. The sound of the bell is not unlike that of a church clock slowly tolling the hour. A friend who came to Gourock on a foggy night said next morning, "What sort of public clock have you here? I heard it strike twenty-seven or twenty-eight last night, and it was still striking when I fell asleep." There is another fog bell at Fort Matilda, and a steam signal away at the Cloch Lighthouse, which makes a sound like a stupendous moan breaking into a sudden shriek. From some of the houses on the hill near the Free Church on a dark and foggy night all three can be heard at intervals sounding portentously in the outer darkness. The effect is far from exhilarating.

has also a Penny Savings Bank ; Bowling, Curling, Skating, Sailing, and Cricket Clubs ; a Floral and Horticultural Society ; a Free-Masons' Lodge ("Firth of Clyde, Gourrock, No. 626," established in 1878) ; and the Gamble Institute, a large and beautifully furnished building, with halls, reading-room, bath, refreshment, and recreation rooms, erected by Mrs Henry Gamble, then of Ashburn, at a cost of about £8000, for the good of the people. The Institute was founded 9th September 1873, and opened February 10th, 1876. It is managed by a Board of Directors, four of whom are elected annually by the members. The others are nominated by Mrs Gamble. Gourrock has also a Young Men's Christian Association ; a Ladies' Benevolent and Clothing Society, formed in 1854 ; Bible and Tract Societies ; a Bible woman ; a Temperance Society ; and a Good Templar Lodge. It has also need for them all, having 20 places licensed for the sale of intoxicating drink, while there are only 4 butchers' shops and 4 bakers'.

Gourrock has been lighted with gas since 1849. The Gourrock Gas-Light Company was formed in 1848*, and the works completed and gas supplied in October of the following year. It was looked on as more of a luxury than a necessity at first, and the charge was

* Mr M'Ewan, the present manager, states that the first business meeting was held on 27th September 1848—Mr George Turner in the chair—when the following gentlemen were elected the first Directors, viz. :—Messrs George Turner, James Alexander, Henry Patten, Wm. Scott, John Thompson, Chas. Wright, Peter Fletcher, John Kilpatrick, and Hugh Young. The original cost of the works was £1500. At first only one man was employed in the works ; now five are required in winter, and about 900 tons of cannel coal used.

high—10s. per 1000 feet, and 2s. 6d. per annum for use of meter. The number of consumers the first year was small—only 200 taking advantage of the improvement. Steadily, however, the consumption increased, and the cost diminished, till the rate now is 5s. per 1000 feet, and 1s. for use of meter. The progress of consumption may be judged of from the fact that while the amount sold in 1851 was three-quarters of a million cubic feet, it had risen now (1880) to six millions and a half.

The Vale of Clyde Tramways Company was incorporated by Act of Parliament, dated 13th July 1871; and the line from Greenock to Gourock was opened on the 1st of July 1873. The line was constructed when wages and material were enormously high; and the contract price for the Gourock part of the line was £10,000 per mile. The traffic is at its ebb in winter, and at its flood in mid-summer, when nearly three times the number of runs is made daily; and the average drawings rise from about £14 per day to £30 and £40—one Glasgow Fair Saturday yielding as much as £93.*

* Mr Bowman, who has charge of the Greenock office, has kindly sent me the following figures :—For the six months ending 30th June 1876, the cars carried nearly 185,000 passengers to and from Gourock—upwards of 21,000 having through tickets by the Caledonian line, and over 37,000 by the South-Western. For the same period in 1878 upwards of 200,000 passengers were carried by car to and from Gourock—over 15,000 with through Caledonian tickets, and over 31,000 with South-Western. For the same period in 1880 (a season of unusual dullness) 164,000 passengers—over 14,000 of these with Caledonian, and over 28,000 with South-Western, through tickets. Taking into the calculation the Greenock or "City" cars, which stop at the Battery, the Company during the whole period of its existence, from July 1873 to July 1880, has made 180,000 journeys on that line, and carried close upon four millions of passengers. The

Gourock has no newspaper of its own, but it is amply supplied every morning with Glasgow and even Edinburgh papers; and in the evening with the *Greenock Telegraph* and *Advertiser*. The *Greenock Herald*, a weekly paper, which gives prominence to Gourock news, has also a large circulation in the burgh.

The farms around Gourock are some of them on Sir Michael Shaw Stewart's lands, and some of them on the Gourock Estate, which, with a front taking in the whole village from the Mussel Dyke to Ashton Toll, runs inland beyond the Wemyss Bay Railway to Loch Thorn—taking the general form of a parallelogram three or three-and-a-half miles long by two broad. The principal crops grown on the farms are corn, hay, turnips, and potatoes. The land also bears some mangel-wurzel. The farm rents around Gourock, as elsewhere, have risen enormously within the last 30 or 40 years. One old man remembers when

Greenock and Gourock service employs 11 cars, 54 horses, and 25 men. Several experiments have been made with steam cars, but hitherto without success, owing mainly to the steep gradient in Chapel Street. The toll through which the Tramway passes between Gourock and Greenock has been taken on by the Tramway Company, and let for £800. The Company repairs its own way. Prior to this arrangement, when the whole road was under one management, the rental latterly amounted to £13,000. Speaking of this toll, there are one or two incidents connected with it. A number of years ago a tollman here, finding the place was not paying, and that the outlook was getting darker and darker, came out deliberately one day, walked across the road, down into the water, and drowned himself. A story is told of another tollman there who was dying. The minister was in paying what he expected to be his last visit. After a few solemn words he raised his hands, and was beginning to offer a prayer, when a sound became audible on the road. The old tollman—with the ruling passion in him strong even in death—turned his head to listen, and suddenly, half raising himself in bed, gasped faintly:—"Whist; bide a wee! There's a kert!"

the united rental of Drumshantie, Midton, and Divert (now about £400) were only about £50. The cost of farm labour, also, has doubled within the time referred to. One farmer told me that a competent farm labourer who used to cost him £8 or £9 in the half-year now costs £18; lads' wages have risen from £6 to £12; and boys' from £3 to £6. Horses that could be bought for £30 now cost from £50 to £60. To compensate for this, the farms under an improved agriculture yield more, and farm stock and produce bring higher prices.

IX. AROUND GOUROCK.

All the romantic scenery of the Clyde is accessible from Gourock by steamer, either direct, or by way of Greenock. In and around Gourock itself there are several beautiful walks and drives, especially those by the coast road beyond Ashton, and by the Lyle Road, over Mount Binian. The walk along the western face of Barrhill, from the Free Church and the Bowling Green to Thrush Hill, is also very fine—commanding, along the greater part of the way, magnificent views of the blue hills of Argyll and the broad Firth of Clyde, busy with coasting vessels of all kinds, and with ships and steamers passing to and from every quarter of the globe. Those who have access to the private grounds around Gourock House will specially enjoy the walk there by the little cascade and the stream. These grounds were much beautified both by the grandfather and the great grandfather of the present proprietor.*

There is also a pleasant and interesting round of eight or ten miles by way of Ravenscraig and the

* Duncan Darroch, who bought the estate from the Stewarts of Castlemilk, had been a poor boy, and, according to one account, had herded cattle on the very hills which were afterwards to be his own. The place seemed to the boy so beautiful that when he went away to seek his fortune in another land he said that if ever he found it he would come home and buy for himself the house and grounds of Gourock. This he actually did in 1784. The present proprietor has an estate (Torridon) in Ross-shire, where he generally stays when not in London. His father, Major Darroch, lived at Gourock House, and took, in consequence, more interest in local affairs. He acted as Provost of Gourock in 1863. The late grieve, Mr Lawson, told me that old General Darroch, who also lived at Gourock, drove to London from Gourock House in his own carriage. The journey occupied eight days, and cost him £35.

Inverkip Valley, returning by Ardgowan and the Cloch. Passing up the Larkfield Road from the corner of the Old Burying-ground, you can turn off, if your taste inclines you that way, to have a look at the Reservoir; or further on, past the New Cemetery, you can strike up by Larkfield farm, to get a view of Smithston—the new Poorhouse for Greenock—a large and handsome edifice, so startling amidst its moorland surroundings as to suggest some great building that has wandered out from town to enjoy the country air. Keeping, however, by the main road, past the Curling Pond and the Gamekeeper's house, the road runs inland by the Auchmede woods to Ravenscraig, where there is a Railway Station, on the Glasgow and Wemyss Bay line. Turning to the left along the Inverkip Valley, the road passes the ruins of Ella, or Isla House and Mill, with which the following tradition is connected:—Several Covenanters, who had taken refuge amongst the hills around Inverkip, finding themselves hard pressed, came to Ella Mill and begged food and shelter. The miller not only refused, but betrayed their whereabouts to the soldiers in pursuit. According to the story, when the soldiers were carrying off their captives, one of the Covenanters turned, and pronounced a curse upon the house, saying that ill would befall both it and its owner for what he had done that day. In particular, he said that where the fire burned on the hearth the common high-road would one day run, and the feet of strangers tread upon it. This prediction, according to the story, has been literally fulfilled, the ruins standing on both sides of the highway. The ruins, however, which probably

suggested the latter part of the story, are about a mile further on, and belong to Cresswell, or Christwell Chapel, connected with an old castle of that name, said, in former days, to rival Ardgowan itself.

Near the road, to the left, on the way to the Roman Bridge, can be seen the site of the Castle of Dunrod, to which Crawford, in his "History of the Shire of Renfrew, brought from the earliest accounts to the year 1700," has the following reference:—

"A little towards the south of Flattertoun stands the Castle of Dunrod, whence an ancient family of the surname of Lindsay took designation, and descended of Sir James Lindsay, the constant companion of King Robert Bruce. John Lindsay of Dunrod, his successor, obtained from King Robert II. the mains of the barony of Kilbrid, in Clydesdale, for his good and faithful services, which he confirmed anno 1382. This family continued to make a considerable figure for many years, and were honoured with diverse matches from several noble families, as Eglinton, Semple, Elphinton, and came to an end in the person of Alexander Lindsay of Dunrod, who alienated that barony in the year 1619 to Sir Archibald Stewart of Blackhall. The family of Dunrod is now represented by Lindsay of Blacksolm. Sir Michael Stewart of Blackhall is present proprietor of the barony of Dunrod. No remains of the Castle are now to be seen there. At that place there is a very high hill, called Dunrod Hill."

This district is also the scene of two ballads of "Auld Dunrod"—one of which begins thus:—

"In Inverkip the witches ride thick,
And in Dunrod they dwell;
But the greatest loon among them a'
Is auld Dunrod himsel'."

The following is the principal part of the other ballad:—

"Auld Dunrod was a gowstie carl,
As ever ye micht see;
And gin he wasna' a warlock wicht,
There was nane in the hail countrie.

Auld Dunrod he stack a pin—
 A bourtrie pin—in the wa',
 And when he wanted his neighbour's milk
 He just gaed the pin a thraw.

He milkit the Laird o' Kellie's kye,
 And a' the kye o' Dunoon;
 And auld Dunrod gat far mair milk
 Than wad mak' a gabbert swim.

And there was nae cumerauld man about
 Wha cam' to him for skill,
 That gif Dunrod didna dae him guid,
 He didna dae him ill.

But the kirk got word o' Dunrod's tricks,
 And the Session they took him in hand;
 And naething was left but auld Dunrod
 Forsooth maun leave the land.

See auld Dunrod he mounted his stick—
 His broomstick mounted he—
 And he flychter't twa'r three times aboot,
 And syne through the air did flee.

Ye wadna kent him in his flicht
 Be a buddock or a crow;
 And he flew awa' by auld Greenock tower,
 And by the Newark ha'."

From the valley, at the point where one of the lodge gates to Ardgowan is reached, our road turns off to the right, and runs through the wood towards Lunderston Bay and Gourock, with the unseen beauties of Ardgowan grounds on the left, till the kennels are passed, and the Firth and hills of Argyll are again in view.

Ardgowan is the residence of Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, Baronet, the 17th in direct male descent from Sir John Stewart, a natural son of King Robert III. This family came to represent also, by marriage, the old families of Shaw of Greenock and Houston of Houston, also "the Porterfields of that ilk," through which family the barony of Duchal was added to the other estates now owned by Sir Michael. His wife, the

Lady Octavia, sister of the Duke of Westminster, has also brought him the estate of Fonthill, near Salisbury. In 1306, Ardgowan for a short time was in possession of the English invaders. Barbour tells how Sir Philip Mowbray, when defeated by Sir James Douglas, came flying

“Through the Largie, him alane,
To Innerkyp.”

Of the old castle of Ardgowan nothing remains but one massive tower. The present mansion (visible amongst its woods from the steamers passing up and down the Firth) was built in 1798. Amongst many interesting relics to be seen at Ardgowan, is a portrait of Napoleon I., painted for his mother by Lefebre; also the big cocked hat which the Emperor wore at the battle of Friedland, where it was pierced by a ball.

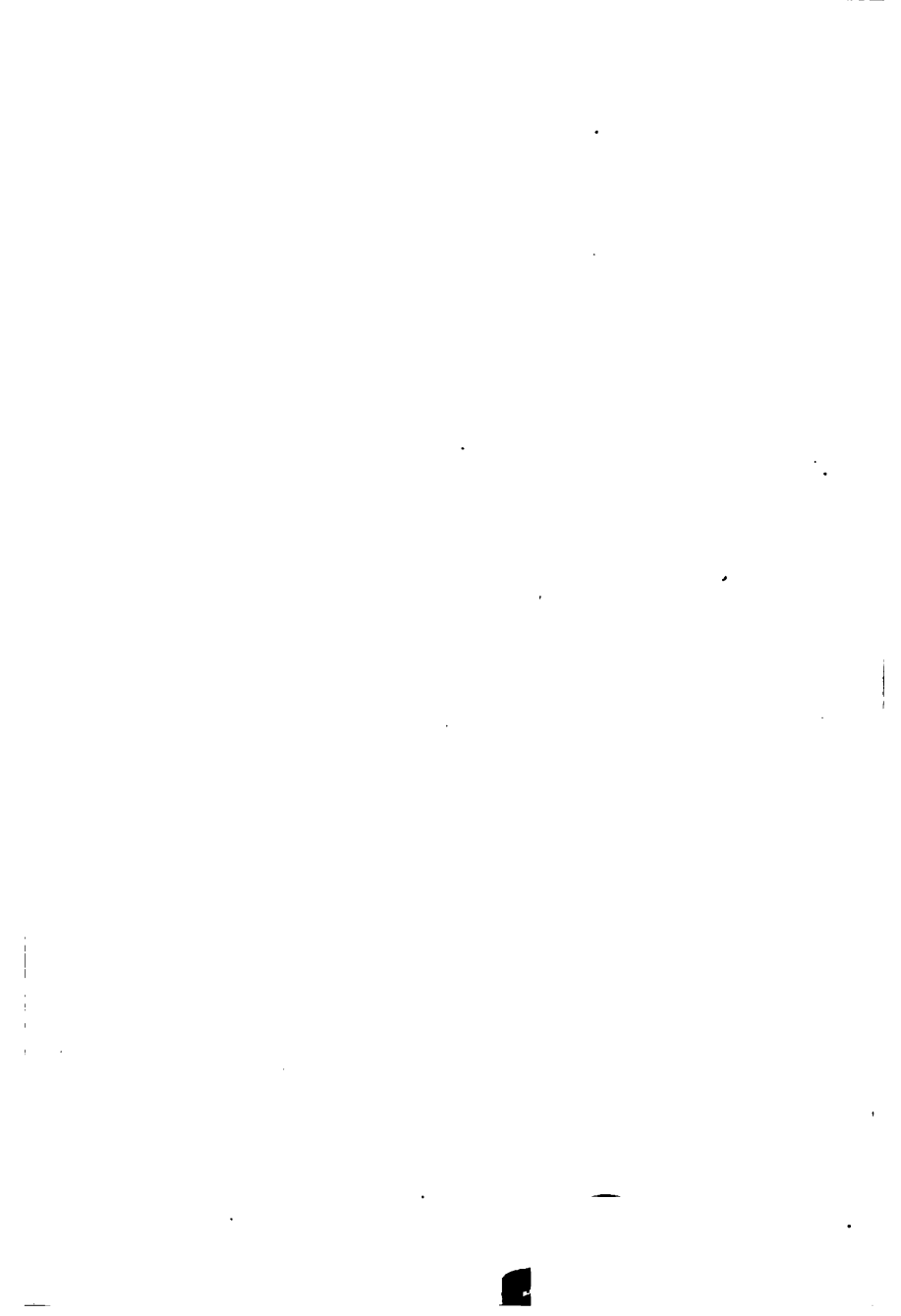
Leaving Ardgowan, and passing Lunderston Bay, on the road back to Gourrock, you reach the Cloch Lighthouse—a huge white tower, erected in 1791. It is 88 feet in height, and its fixed light is seen from a distance of 13 miles. Round the point is the Cloch Inn, with its Ferry, the ancient highway to the kingdom of the Dalriadic Scots, and much used down to the close of last century as a waterway from Renfrewshire across to Dunoon and the neighbouring districts in Argyll.

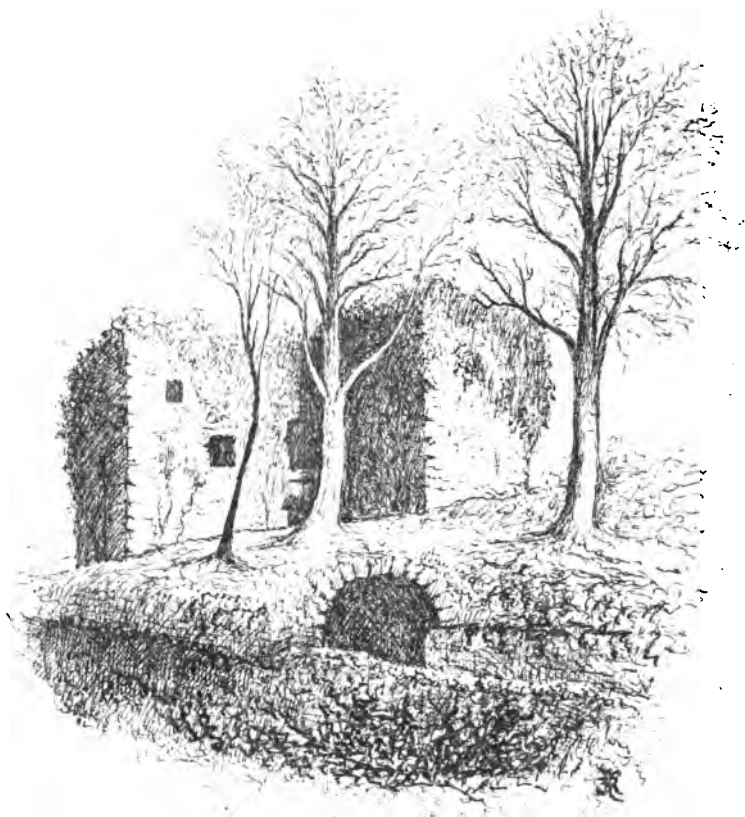
Off the shore here, in 1822, a disaster occurred which was long remembered in Gourrock. The “Catherine of Iona,” with forty-six persons on board, was run down by a steamer, and almost instantly sank, carrying with her the whole of her crew and passengers excepting three or four. A similar disaster occurred at Kempoch Point

three years later, when the steamer "Comet,"* as she was rounding the point at night, on her way to Glasgow, was run into by another steamer (the "Ayr") and sunk. About seventy of the bodies washed ashore from these disasters were buried in Gourrock, in the upper corner of the Old Burying-ground, opposite the Eastern School. Still further along, off the Battery Point, the beautiful steamer "Iona," the first of that name built by the famous firm of David Hutcheson & Co., was run into and sunk in 1862. It was at the time of the war between the Northern and Southern States, and the "Iona" was bought as a blockade-runner. She was run into by another steamer (the "Chanticleer"), also sold to run the blockade. There the "Iona" lies to this day, in 90 feet of water—no attempt having ever been made to raise her. Many people doubted at the time the fact of her having been sunk; and no inquiry was every made into the cause of the accident—the Act of Parliament providing for such inquiries not having been at that time passed.

Half a mile's walk or so from the Cloch Ferry brings you to a porter's lodge, and an avenue leading up the green slope to a house built originally for a lady who had been a dressmaker to Queen Adelaide, and whose carriage and pair was a familiar sight on the Cloch Road in those days. Wrecked suddenly in fortune through the conduct or misconduct of a nephew, she drove a nail into the wall and hanged herself.

* This was Comet No. 2. Comet No. 1 was lost on the shores of a Highland loch—Henry Bell being on board at the time. The engine of Comet No. 1 is preserved in Kensington Museum.





Across the stream are Castle Levan grounds and mansion house, the property now of Mr John Polson, of the firm of Brown & Polson, Paisley. On the hill immediately behind stands buried in the wood the ivy-clad ruin of Levan Castle—a stronghold which belonged in ancient times to the Mortons, but was transferred in 1547 to William, Lord Temple, and is now, like almost all the lands around Gourrock estate, the property of the Lairds of Ardgowan.

Approaching Gourrock from Levan, the first point jutting out into the Firth is M'Inroy's Point—named after a West India merchant of that name, who lived at one time in the neighbouring mansion—a Point as remarkable for its geological peculiarities as for its beauty in the prospect. Going down to examine it, you find it composed mainly of trap dykes, which have burst asunder the sandstone rock, and which rise at some points like ramparts of adamant. The trap is of a bluish basaltic appearance, easily distinguishable from the surrounding and intervening rocks. Another of these remarkable dykes is seen a little further on, beside what is commonly known as 'The Tinkler's Well.*

From this to Kempoch Point and Craigmuschat Quarry the geology of Gourrock is full of variety and interest. Specimens of numerous stratified and unstratified rocks—such as talc, schist, clayslate, greywacke, felstone, granite, syenite, and conglomerate—are found

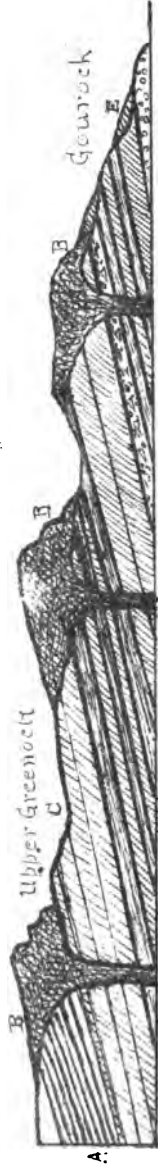
* This well derived its name from a band of gipsies or tinkers who encamped at this spot in 1826. The water is pure and delicious, and has long been in high repute in Gourrock. There is another spring of excellent water at the east end of Gourrock, near the Tramway Stables. It is known as "the Borewell," because come upon while boring was going on in search of coal.

in abundance; and the appearance of the rocks along the shore, especially when closely examined, is very curious and interesting. Along part of the shore line are beds and projecting masses and ledges of beautifully variegated conglomerate rock, against which at high water the waves fret themselves into foam, sometimes, when the wind is high from the south-west, dashing in and exploding in the hollows and fissures of the rock with a roar like thunder. Further on, the Old Red Sandstone appears; and beyond it a dark sea-wall of trap. At some points the molten rock from underneath has boiled over the sandstone bed, and fused it into unity with itself, and into a flinty mass exhibiting the peculiarities of a stratified and an igneous rock in one.

The sandstone of Gourrock belongs to the upper group of Old Red; and, owing to the presence of mica, it hardens by exposure to the air, giving it greater value for building purposes. Most of the houses on the hill overlooking Ashton Bay are built of the sandstone excavated to make room for the houses themselves. This hill, known on the western side as Barrhill, and the ridge (running out to a point at Kempoch) that separates Gourrock proper from Ashton, has apparently been heaved up by volcanic agency. In the heart of it is the stupendous mass of whinstone, or, more properly, felstone, in which the Craigmuschat Quarry is wrought. The surface of the rock under the turf is covered with a layer of boulder clay; and is found when laid bare to have the polished and striated appearance that indicates glacial action. Arctic shells have been found at low water in the clay near the mussel dyke.

GEOLOGICAL SECTIONS.

Ideal Section, shewing the general dip of the Coast Strata.

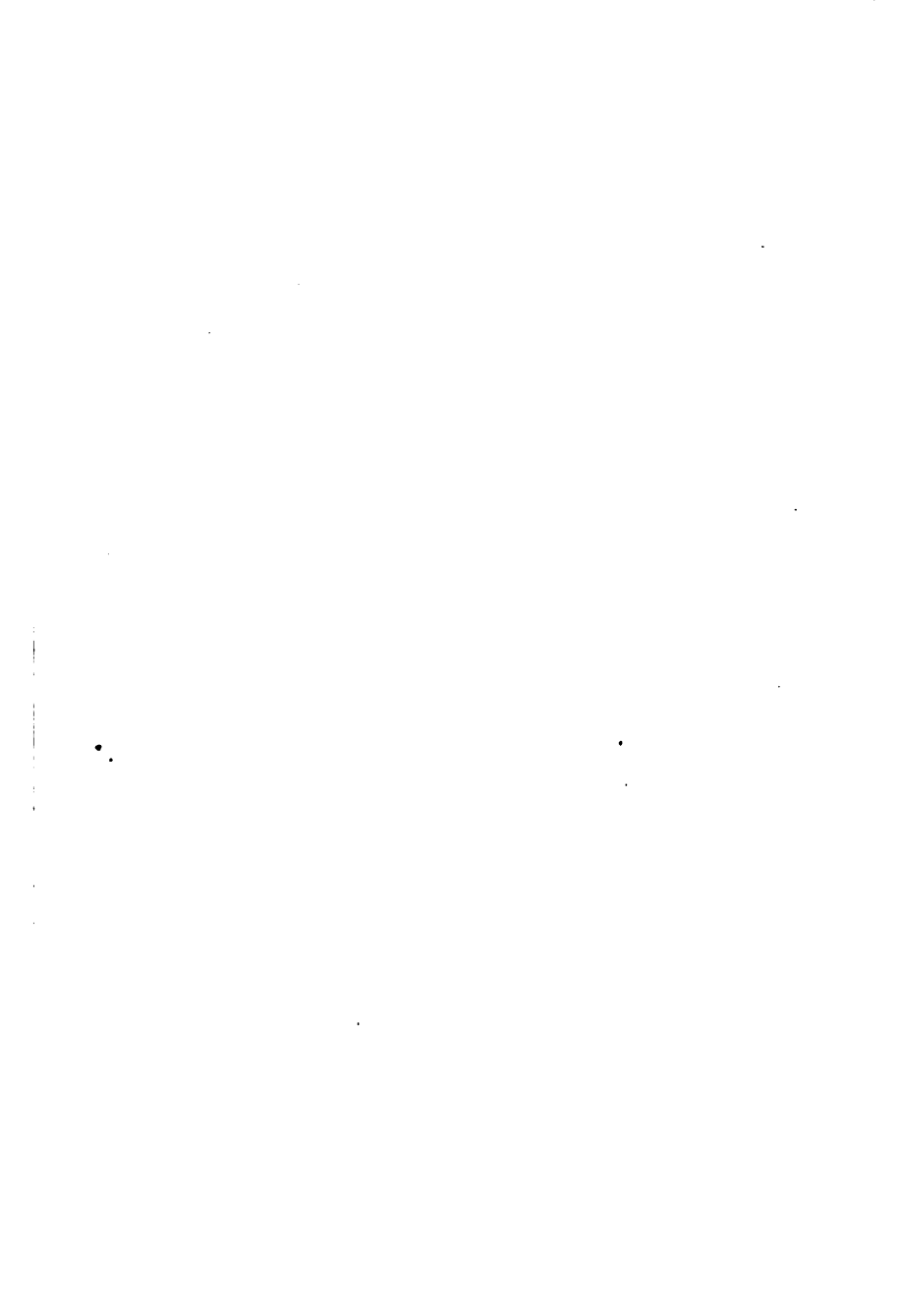


A. Balagan Series, seen at Lynedoch St. tunnel. **C.** Beds of sandstone and conglomerate
B. Overflow of trap. **D.** Hypothetical neck of trap. **E.** Water deposits (glacial).

Generalized Section.



A. Carboniferous Series. **B.** Balagan Series. **C.** Old Red Sandstone Series. **D.** Trap.



X. VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

No visitor should leave Gourock without ascending the Tower Hill, and getting the view from the top—selecting a day (if he can get the chance) when the sky is blue and the horizon clear. If Gourock is not a striking place to look at, it is one of the finest points in Scotland to look from.* Of all the romantic views on the Firth of Clyde—numerous as they are—few take in so much both of natural beauty and historical association as this one. Standing on the greensward near the little Tower that crowns the height, the eye ranges over a glorious panorama of hills and waters. Across the broad blue Firth—its waters gay with white-sailed yachts, and its shores fringed here and there with sparkling villages—tower the giant hills of Argyle. Over Kilcreggan and Roseneath are seen the Alps of Arrochar, while more to the east, across another stretch of water, fair Helensburgh and the dark

* Many people are repelled from Gourock by the prosaic aspect of the village as seen from the passing steamer, and still more by the unsightly appearance of the shore beside the pier, with its litter of ugly sheds. The sight sends away many even of the poorer class, who come down from the smoky town to enjoy the brightness and sparkling beauty of the coast. A man on board an excursion steamer was overheard asking another if he wouldn't get ashore at Gourock. "Na, na," said the other, "Gourock's jist Port Glesca, and mair so." An effort should be made to improve that shore, and do away with the unfavourable and really unfair impression which it gives of the whole place. Let those who have hitherto been led to go past Gourock as if there was nothing there to see, land and walk up to the Tower Hill, and say if they might not have gone far further and yet fared far worse.

Point of Ardmore draw the eye towards the far-receding Vale of Clyde.

Below us, to the left, lies Ashton Bay and the lovely wooded promontory known as M'Inroy's Point. Beneath us lies the broad green lap of the hill, and beyond it, on the front of the plateau, the Free Church with its tower, and the Castle amongst its trees.

To the right, in the green valley, lies Gourrock House, surrounded by its woods. There also, like a map beneath the eye, lies the eastern part of the village, with its finely sheltered bay, where numberless yachts lie peacefully at their moorings, and where on a summer afternoon the sparkling waters are alive with rowing boats and skiffs. On the other side of the bay, beyond the quadrangular lines of the timber pond, the Floating Bath, with its gay flag, lies moored at the end of its little pier. Further round, touching the western extremity of the Greenock Esplanade, lies Fort Matilda—the solitary defence of the Clyde—where, on Saturday afternoon, artillery practice is carried on; and where, in the absence of invaders to destroy, the artillerymen devote themselves to the less exciting but more pleasing occupation of cultivating the vegetables which flourish in patches behind the tiny ramparts.

Looking away from Fort Matilda to the left you see at the foot of the hill the Retreat for old sailors. It is built in the Elizabethan style. The plateau on which it stands is an ancient raised beach. This asylum was built in 1850, with money left for the purpose by a native of Gourrock, Sir Gabriel Wood, who held the rank of Commissary-General in the Army,

and who died at Bath in 1849. The asylum was reared "for the relief and comfort of aged and decayed master-mariners and merchant seamen of the counties of Argyll, Ayr, Dumbarton, Lanark, and Renfrew."

Behind this Retreat rises Mount Binian, or "the Binghamans" (sometimes called "the Craigs"), over the crest of which sweeps the Lyle Road*, commanding an even finer view than the height on which we stand. Mount Binian hides from our view the busy town of Greenock, where more than 100 steamers call every day; famous also for its shipbuilding; famous for the trade in sugar and sugar-refining, which has won it the name of "Sugaropolis;" and specially interesting to many as the birthplace of James Watt (born in 1736), and the burial-place of Burns' "Highland Mary."

Lifting our eyes now over Fort Matilda to the landscape beyond, we can discern, far off across the Firth, the wooded promontory of Ardmore, and beyond it Cardross, famous as the place where Robert the Bruce ended his eventful life. The king lived in the old Castle of Cardross, of which nothing remains now

*So called after Ex-Provost Abram Lyle of Greenock, during whose term of office, and under whose initiative, the road was made. It was wittily suggested by a Canadian at the time that the heights themselves should be named "The Heights of Abram." The highest part of the roadway is 381 feet above the level of the road at the Gourrock Toll-Bar below. The gradient averages 1 in 10. The work, completed May 3d, 1880, was begun for the purpose (immediately) of giving work to the unemployed during the trying years that preceded. The cost of construction amounted to about £13,000. From the top, on a clear day, the Townsend and St Rollox chimney-stalks in Glasgow, and the distant peaks of Ben Cruachan, can be discerned. The name "Craigs," sometimes given to this hill, is from the Gaelic *creig*, a rock. The name "Binian," is also from the Gaelic *beinn*, or little hill, from *beinn*, or the more familiar *Ben*.

but the foundations. There, as far as his decaying health and strength permitted, he spent his time in hunting, gardening, and shipbuilding. He was fond, also, of sailing on the Firth, and must often, on these excursions, have landed at Gourrock, or cast his anchor down there in Gourrock Bay. He died at Cardross on June 7th, 1329.

Looking more to the left from Cardross, you see the fair town of Helensburgh, named after Lady Helen of Luss, whose husband (Sir James Colquhoun) planned the town in 1774. Now, with its broad and regular streets and handsome houses and gardens, it is one of the finest coast towns in the west of Scotland. There Henry Bell (whose monument on the rock at Dunglass, near Bowling, is familiar to all who have sailed up or down the Clyde) made his first experiments in propelling boats with steam—experiments which terminated triumphantly in what was then the wonder of the time—the little steamboat “Comet,” of 30 tons burden and three-horse power, the first passenger steamer in Europe, and the pigmy progenitor of the fleet of magnificent steamers that now ply on the old “Comet’s” route between Glasgow and the Coast. Bell died at Helensburgh in 1830.

The wooded hill jutting out into the Firth on this side of Helensburgh, screening its western extremity from our view, is Roseneath, belonging, in the days of Wallace and Bruce, to the Earl of Lennox, but transferred about 400 years ago to the House of Argyll, to which it still belongs. Roseneath Castle stands on the other side of the hill. Some of the Covenanters found

refuge there in the old days of persecution. Westward from Roseneath stretch the green slopes of Kilcreggan, terminating at Cove Point. Over these you see the distant peaks of Glenfruin and the Alps of Arrochar, with the savage height known as the Duke of Argyll's Bowling Green, that guards the entrance to Loch Goil. Over Cove Point, with its modern castle,* lies Loch Long; and far off, on its shore, nestling in the nook under the majestic heights of Glen Finnart, you can discern the little village of Ardentinnny, made famous by Tannahill's song to the fair maid who served at the Inn—

“Far lone among the Highland hills,
 ‘Midst Nature's wildest grandeur;
 By rocky dens and woody glens,
 With weary steps I wander.
 The langsome way, the darksome day,
 The mountain mist sae rainy,
 Are nought to me when gaun to thee,
 Sweet lass o' Arranteenie.”

That huge hill advancing southwards into the Firth from Ardentinnny is Finnartmore—so called, in Gaelic, from its resemblance to a gigantic boat lying keel uppermost. This end of it projecting into the Firth is called Strone, from the Gaelic word for a nose. Along the base of it, by the water's-edge, stretch, in thin line, the coast villages of Blairmore and Strone. The latter village rounds the point, and runs up the shore of Holy Loch towards Kilmun. There, in a vault of the old church, the Ducal House of Argyll has its burial-place. The late Duchess was buried there in 1878. The church stands on the site of an ancient college,

* Seat of David Richardson, Esq., head of the well-known Greenock firm of sugar merchants and refiners.

built in 1450 by the founder of the Argyll family, Sir Colin Campbell of Lochaweside. It was dedicated to St Mun, who, according to tradition, was a disciple of St Columba, and built a chapel there, and gave the place its name.*

On the southern shore of the little Loch, is the village Sandbank or Ardenadam, and the beautiful grounds of Hafton. Near Ardenadam is a cromlech, where, according to old local tradition, the progenitor of our race, the veritable Adam, was buried, giving the place its name. No remains of Adam, however, have been found there, except his name; and even it has lost its value as evidence, from the discovery that "Ardenadam" is merely *Arden-na-tuam*, or the graveyard height. Yonder, where the Loch turns into the Firth, is Hunter's Quay, where the Royal Clyde Yacht Club has its headquarters, and where on the morning of a regatta the yachts with their snowy sails are seen fluttering like a flock of sea-gulls.

Further along the same coast are the famous watering-places of Kirn and Dunoon. Above the Dunoon pier—not far from where the Firth disappears from view—you can see the little rounded hill on which in old

*Holy Loch (in Gaelic, *Loch Seant*) probably derives its name from the same source. Hugh M'Donald, in his "Days at the Coast" (page 388), refers to another curious tradition explanatory of the name. It was—that St Mungo, intending to found a cathedral in Glasgow, and wishing to make it specially sacred, by laying its foundations in soil from the Holy Land, sent a ship to bring some. The ship accomplished her mission so far as to get the desired cargo, and return to the Firth of Clyde. There, however, she was assailed by a frightful storm, which disabled her, drove her up the Firth, and broke her to pieces in the Loch, which thereafter got the name of Holy Loch, on account of the sacred cargo which had sunk in its waves.

days frowned the famous Castle of Dunoon, with its dark memories of bloodshed and battle. The original "dun" or fort was built more than a thousand years since by the Dalriadic Scots. Six hundred years ago the fort had grown into a powerful stronghold, which was besieged in 1333 by Baliol, and taken by storm. It was retaken by the Steward of Scotland, assisted by the Campbells of Lochawe, and the garrison put to the sword. In the time of Henry the Eighth it was again besieged—this time by the Earl of Lennox, who, with the aid of a fleet and an English force, captured it.

In 1563 Mary Queen of Scots visited Dunoon, and stayed there for some days with the Countess of Argyll. In 1646 Dunoon was the scene of a horrible massacre, perpetrated by the Campbells upon their hereditary foes the Lamonts of Bute and Cowal, to whom, prior to the 14th century, Dunoon belonged. The Campbells made an unexpected descent upon the Lamonts at Toward and Ascog, and brought many of those whom they had captured to Dunoon, where they hanged thirty-six of them upon one tree, and stabbed many of the others, including "John Jamieson, Provost of Rothesay," with their dirks.

Such are some of the points in the view from the Tower Hill that attract the eye, and awaken sometimes a tragic, sometimes a tender interest—both emotions harmonizing with a scene which, in its natural features, unites so much that is lovely with so much that is majestic and wild.

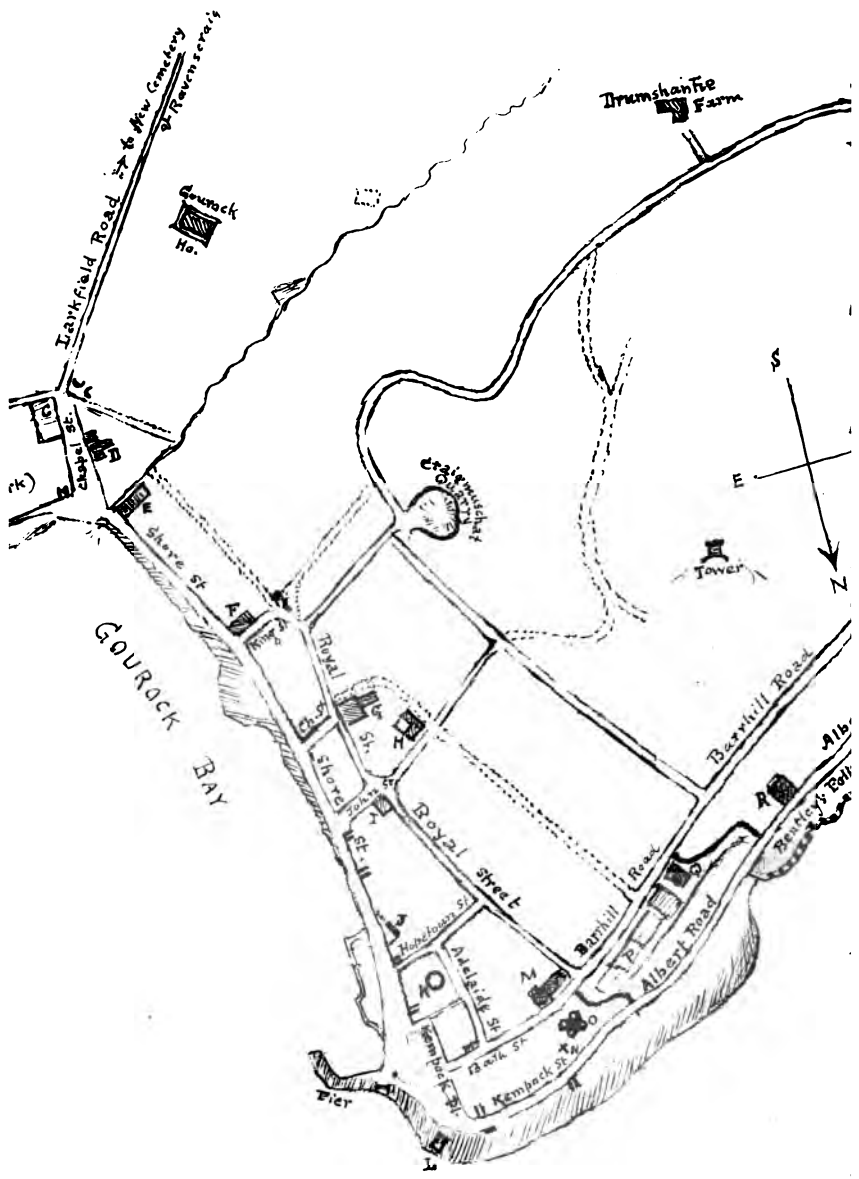
Change of season and change of weather introduce into the view infinite variety; as do also the changes

of light and shadow, tone and tint, that are in ceaseless progress from the pale blue morning up to the dazzling noon, and from noon down to the purple night.

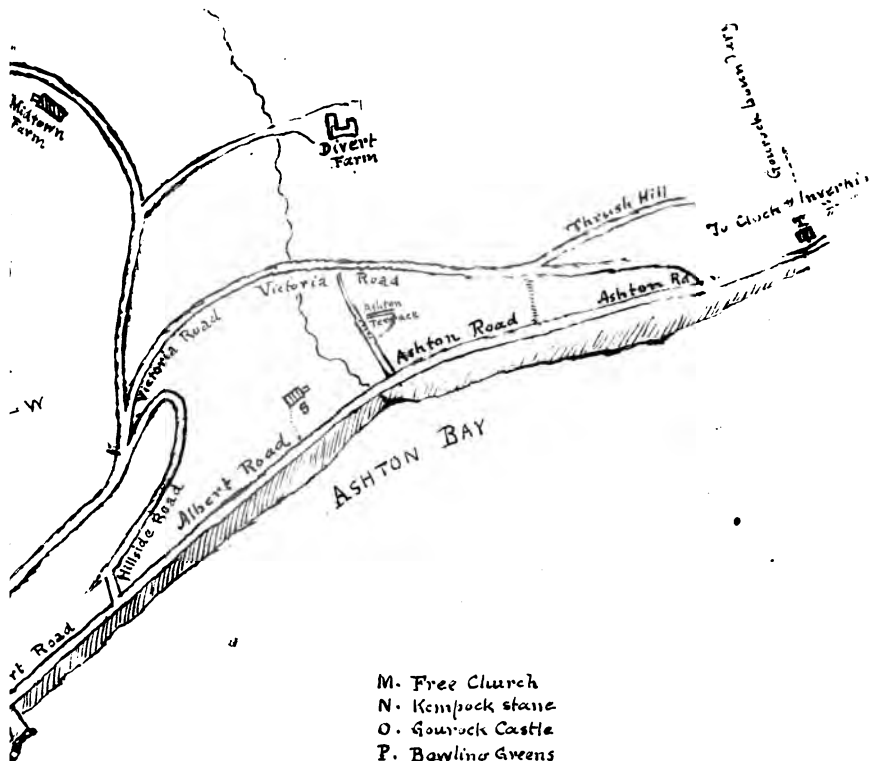
But in all seasons, and in almost all weathers, the view is glorious—even on the wild days when the Firth is white with foam and flying spray, and the steamers are rolling and plunging across, and the great sun, like a giant in battle, is bursting forth ever and again from amongst the flying rain-clouds.

But no view compares with that on a summer evening, when the sun, descending behind the mountains, casts a gleaming pathway of gold across the calm and silent sea ; or, having gone down, leaves the purple hills crowned with a crimson aureole, and transmutes into burning gold the clouds that before were dark, lighting up the whole western heaven with inconceivable splendour. It is then that one feels stealing into his heart the consciousness of a land that eye hath not seen, and of music that ear hath not heard. In that sunset glory one sees gleaming before him the symbol and hope of a transfigured world—"a land from sin and sorrow free"—a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Inverkeithing
20-11-1914



Kempock
Point



- M. Free Church
- N. Kempock stone
- O. Gourrock Castle
- P. Bawling Greens
- Q. Episcopal Church
- R. United Presbyterian Church.
- S. Ashburn
- T. Ashton Toll

|| Hotels.

